APRIL 1981 NUMBER 38 $2.50

THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

USED SHIPS FOR *TRAVELLER*

Expert D&D™

"THE DOUBLE-TIMING DOUBLE-CROSSING PICK-A-PAST PARADOX"

1980 GAME SURVEY RESULTS

INSIDE STORY! THE COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT

TIME WAR

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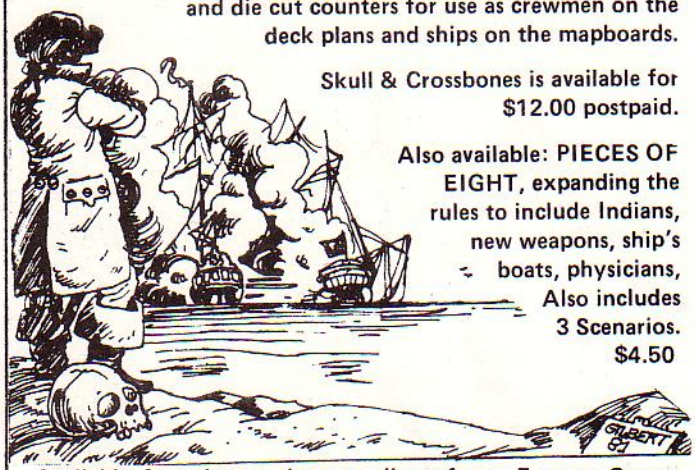

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THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 38 – APRIL, 1981

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In This Issue

Our lead story is Aaron Allston's review of TSR's new *Expert D&D.* On the whole, he likes it. Find out why on page 18.

This issue ought to be arriving on or about April 1. That's our only excuse for a few of the other things within these pages. It's nice to let off a little steam once in a while!

As promised, we have the survey results this time. Compiling our annual survey becomes a more massive job every year. This year we used a computer, and still almost didn't survive. Special thanks to Elisabeth Barrington, Earl Cooley, and Mark Richmond for designing the program, and to Elisabeth, Denis Loubet, and Chad Irby for hours over the CRT inputting millions of numbers.

Not in this issue (sorry – we lied last time) is the "Conan's Greatest Hits" article. The PRESTAGS variant for Conan's battles doesn't yet live up to its billings.

What do you think of the gold cover? Like? Dislike? Don't care? It's another experiment – if it works, we may do it again once a year or so. Comments?

–SJ

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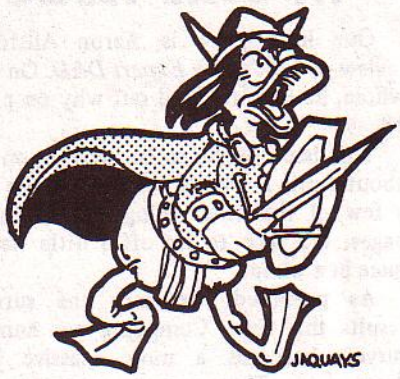


WHERE WE'RE GOING

General status report: The next three sets of Cardboard Heroes are well along. By the time you read this, they ought to be available – see the ad elsewhere in this issue.

CAR WARS is coming along pretty well. We figured out a better way to do the armor rules. Now the big problem is squeezing everything down into the package. This is going to be the equivalent of some peoples' $6 or $7 games in a $3 ziplock.

VAMPIRE (*probable* title unless something strange happens) is taking a back seat at the moment. Too much else to do. Once the CAR WARS typeset draft is ready, I'll look at VAMPIRE.

* * *

As you probably noticed, the cover price this issue is up to $2.50, but we're back to 40 pages. Inflation forced the price increase, but we can try to make up for it by giving you more pages. (The ads in this issue, by themselves, didn't really justify a 40-pager. Oh, well.) We'll keep trying to get out 40 pages whenever we can. If you want to help, you can buy our advertisers' games . . . and write to them to say you saw their ad in TSG. Advertisers go on results. From everything we can find out, TSG is a good market – but the advertisers like some specific feedback as well.

The subscription price is *not* going up – not right away, anyhow. So a subscription is a better deal, comparatively, than it was. Unless the economy straightens out we'll eventually have to raise subscription price as well . . . but we'll hold off as long as we can, rather than *contribute* to the price spiral before we absolutely have to.

There have been a number of questions about our review-everything policy (one industry magazine called it a "crusade"). A few questions and answers:

Who writes your reviews? Some are written by staff members, the rest by readers. While Forrest often assigns reviews to specific people, every month we get a number of unsolicited reviews that also see print. Most "feature" reviews are by assignment, but this is not a hard-and-fast rule either.

How do you insure fairness? We can't – not 100%. If and when we let a really messed-up review get by, we'll run a counter-opinion or a correction, as necessary.

But there are several things we do to *try* to insure fairness. *First,* we will review *any* computer game, SF or fantasy game or supplement, SF/fantasy miniatures line we receive. It doesn't matter who published it – large or small, advertiser or non-advertiser.

Second, reviews are based on nothing but the product. In some hobbies (not necessarily just gaming), there are magazines that review everything favorably to keep potential advertisers happy. There are others that consistently puff some product lines and downgrade others. Sorry . . . we don't like that, and we won't do it. Everyone will get as fair treatment as we can manage – but if "fair" means saying that a rotten game is a rotten game, that's how it is. We understand that this policy is not the optimum one for collecting big advertising bucks. That's the way it goes. We'd rather thave a reputation for honesty than for always pulling punches and "getting along."

Third, every review we receive gets some kind of checking. If the company has been so kind as to send us a review copy of the game, then a staff member can check "outside" reviews against the game. Many reviews have been rejected at this stage because the reviewer clearly hadn't played the game (or had played it wrong!). If we have no copy of the game, we try to find/borrow one. If that's not possible, we tend to go on the reputation of the reviewer. With all other things equal, we prefer to deal with a reviewer

Next Issue

Our March issue will be devoted to computer gaming, with designer's notes by Lord British, creator of Akalabeth;

A featured review of Strategic Simulations' first science fiction game;

"Fantasy World," a story by Timothy Zahn;

"Computers to Go," a marketing effort of special interest to gamers;

Also, the winners of the magic contest;

And more than a few capsule reviews.

we *know* than a newcomer. (This can be unfair to someone breaking in, and we're sorry. But the important thing to us is to make sure that the readers get the best information possible. We'll encourage a newcomer when we can – like when we have a copy of the game, to check his work – in the hopes that he/she will develop into a "regular.") Several of our regular reviewers live in Austin, which makes it much easier to check and consult.

Fourth, the review format itself calls for each reviewer to make both favorable and unfavorable comments about the game. Nothing has yet been produced that was without flaws, or was (quite) totally worthless. A reviewer who can't look deeply enough to see this is likely to get a rejection slip with the "It seemed extraordinarily biased" line checked off.

So – we can blow it on a review, but we usually don't. Better than half of the complaints we get from publishers about "bad reviews" have ended with a "my gosh, it really does say that in the game, doesn't it?" letter from the company. And we have even received compliments on *unfavorable* reviews – from publishers saying that they appreciated the comments and would change the game. Now *that's* the kind of publisher our hobby needs more of.

Why should a store carry TSG when some of the reviews say "don't buy this game"? I had this question from a big wholesaler at a convention, and it floored me. I felt like coming back with "Why should a store carry a crummy game instead of sending it back to the wholesaler?" But I didn't – he was serious. Now it seems to me that a store would *want* a game magazine to carry honest reviews rather than mindless praise of everything. That way the store-owner could use the reviews to guide his buying. I know of several retailers, and at least one wholesaler, who use TSG and other reviews just that way. But I don't know. I'd like to get letters from retailers and wholesalers with *their* views on reviews. Do you want sugar-coating, honesty, or what? And why?

How do you choose games for long reviews instead of capsules? Featured reviews – 1 or 2 pages long – are for two kinds of games: (1) a game from a major publisher, highly plugged, with a "big name." This is the sort of game that everyone will think about buying. Therefore, we run a detailed review as soon as possible so that everyone can make up their minds. A perfect example is TSR's *Expert D&D*, reviewed in this issue. (2) A very good game from a minor publisher (like Eon's *Cosmic Encounter*, last issue) may get a featured review after it's been out a while, just to make sure everyone knows about it. Similarly, we'll do a featured review of GDW's *Triplanetary* (a real SF classic, now being re-issued after years out of print).

Can I write a review? Do you pay? Yes, and yes. Capsule reviews pay a flat $5 if accepted. Features are a penny a word. See the writers' information in the review section – or send a SASE for our Writers' Guide.

–Steve Jackson

GAME MASTER

GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first refereed to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

GAME MASTER also invites publishers to send errata or clarifications for their new games. They will be printed as space allows.

Raid on Iran

Great game . . . but why can only one group of Americans double move each turn?

Also, since Iranians are alerted by the first normal attack, does this mean only one group of Iranians in a building, like the Chancery, can ever be surprised with a +3 bonus?

–John S. Trembley

The double-move doesn't simulate any magical ability of one batch of commandos each turn to wear winged boots. It is for playability and effect – it keeps the Iranians from ever being sure just what the Americans are capable of. If all the U.S. troops could double-move, they'd be too powerful – and not as interesting.

Only one group of Iranians in any one building will ever be attacked at the +3, but careful planning will allow the U.S. player to get the +3 two or three times in widely separated areas.

–Steve Jackson

Star Fleet Battles

Task Force Games' Steve Cole writes: "With the aid of our computer, we use an interesting procedure for doing errata sheets. Each time a question comes in, the memory file for that sheet is called up and the required item added. If the question came from outside, we run a printout of the updated file and sent it to (the writer) . . . If the game is ever reprinted, we use the errata sheet to make the changes required."

Steve sent us the whole ***Star Fleet Battles*** *errata sheet for our convenience in keeping up with questions. He suggested (and we agree) that a few of the sections were worth printing immediately.*

32.62 The last crew unit on a ship cannot be killed by hits scored against the ship. (There would almost always be some survivors.)

59.421 All fighters must have their target in the FA firing arc to have a "lock on" for purposes of firing or guiding drones.

105.8 The batteries on Andromedan ships can hold five units of power each.

109.5 Hydran fusion beams are destroyed on "torp" hits.

119.217 Tugs are considered to be the same size as CA's. Pods are considered to be "smaller ships" if detached, and part of the Tug if attached.

Ogre/G.E.V

In G.E.V. standard scenarios, can you set up your immobile CP in the lake (underwater)?

–Mark Bassett

No, CPs cannot be set up (or move) on or under water. An amphibious (or wholly aquatic) CP would be an interesting option, but I'll leave it to players to figure it out. It should be more "expensive" than any regular CP.

–SJ

Regarding George Collins' rules for solo play (TSG 35), does the Ogre *have* to waste a valuable missile on a mere GEV or other unit just because it's within range? I find that by the time the Ogre is near the CP, it's already blown its best weapons.

–Philip A. Natta

Good point. For starters, why not say that the chance the Ogre fires a missile is equal to the number of missiles it has, divided by 6? An Ogre with 6 missiles will always fire one; an Ogre with only one left will fire only on a roll of 6.

–SJ

The Double-Timing Double-Crossing Pick-a-Past Paradox

by Richard Kearns

It was the last noon New York City would ever see.

Lydia checked the circuits of the homemade atomic bomb one last time. It was a good job. The thing looked just like the bombs that had been found in Chicago and Los Angeles. But the police would never find this one in time.

Satisfied, she replaced the cover, set the timing mechanism, and moved back to the control panel. The entire board was lit.

New York simply would not come up with the ransom – one billion dollars in small bills, postage stamps, box tops and discount coupons. The Coalition Against Poverty – Lydia laughed when she thought about the name – would have to follow through with its threats.

She flipped the switch marked "Initial Sequence."

"Wait!"

Swearing, she whirled and grabbed for the submachine gun that lay on the work table next to the control panel. A white beam of light stabbed past her hand, fusing the weapon to the table top. She jerked her hand back and froze.

"Please try and remain calm. I am not a member of your police force, and I have no intention of preventing you from detonating your crude device."

Turning slowly, she stared at him. He was dressed in a kelly-green jumpsuit with a red hourglass insignia on the left-hand pocket. In his right hand was a small silvery tube, half an inch in diameter and six inches long, which he pointed in her direction like a gun. He was good-looking: black hair, blue eyes, a long face, and a slender, well-muscled body.

"Who are you?" Lydia backed up against the control panel, her hands behind her, her eyes fixed on the intruder's weapon. "How did you get in here?"

"Move away from the controls, please. Slowly." He gestured with the tube. "My name is Fareek O'Houlihan. I am a Time Traveler."

Lydia moved away from the controls. Slowly. She sat down in a chair near the open doorway to the kitchen while Fareek walked over to the worktable and poked at what was left of the submachine gun. "That's really too bad," he said. "Antique weapons fascinate me. I had hoped to take this one back with me as a souvenir. But now –"

"Why are you here?" Lydia blurted out.

"Please don't be alarmed." Still aiming the tube at her, he stepped over to the control panel, studied it for a moment, turned off the switch for the initital sequence, and then shut the whole thing down. "I am here only to delay you. I have absolutely no intention of stopping you from carrying through with your intended – um – discipline." He pocketed the tube and sat down in the control chair.

"Delay me?"

"Yes. I must insist that you not detonate your device for another two and a half hours."

"Two and a half hours!"

"Yes."

"Look, all I want to do is blow up New York City. What difference does it make to you whether it's at noon or at 2:30? It's still going to be a big hole in the ground."

"Ah. That's a very good question. According to our records, Harold Finstermaker, the inventor of the time machine

and the founder of the Time Traveler Society, will leave New York City at 1:30 today, alive, reaching the New Jersey state line at 2:45 in the afternoon. He can't very well do that if you blow up New York at –" he looked at his wristwatch "– 12:14 today, can he?"

"I can see your problem."

"I'm glad."

"But try and see it from my point of view."

"Your point of view?"

"Every minute I spend waiting to blow up New York City is another minute the cops and the Feds have to track me down here. I can't wait around for them to come busting through the door. Besides, I've got a reputation to maintain."

"Hm. Well, we do know that New York City was blown up today."

"That's a relief."

"Wait!" Another figure materialized by the door. It was Fareek, but with a purple jumpsuit that had a green circle on the right-hand pocket. "Don't do it!"

"Who are you?"

"I am Fareek O'Houlihan, Time Traveler."

"You can't be Fareek O'Houlihan, Time Traveler. *I* am Fareek O'Houlihan, Time Traveler."

"That's impossible."

"You must be a fake."

"I'm not a fake! *You're* a fake!" The second Fareek drew his tube.

Lydia just stared at the both of them.

"All right," said the first Fareek, "if you are the real Fareek, then why are you here?"

"I'm here to delay the detonation of this bomb for an hour."

"An hour!"

"Yes. Our records indicate that the radiation from the explosion which is supposed to blow up New York City today actually caused a mutation in the genes of Harold Finstermaker while he was driving out of town. This mutation produced his genius son Harvey, who later invented the time machine and founded the Time Traveler Society."

"That's silly."

"It is not."

"I bet you're from the other side and you're only trying to sabotage history and assassinate our founder so you can have the galaxy all to yourself."

"I am not from the other side. *You're* from the other side, You're trying to prevent a mutant Harvey!"

"Wait!"

The three of them watched another Fareek O'Houlihan materialize at the door, this time dressed in jeans and a red flannel shirt.

"Who are you?"

"Yeah!"

"I am Fareek O'Houlihan, Time Traveler. I've come to save the world."

"You can't be Fareek O'Houlihan. We are."

"At least I am. He's not."

"Liar!"

Lydia blew the rape whistle she wore on a chain around her neck. Fareek, Fareek, and Fareek shut up. "I know a way to solve this."

"Good."

"Great."

"What is it?"

"Who won the World Series of 2027?"

"The Cubs."

"The Mets."

"There was no World Series in 2027."

"Oh my. That didn't work at all."

"Hey – how could the Mets win? Didn't they get blown up with New York?"

"Yeah!"

"They moved to Cleveland."

"Wait!"

"Wait!"

This time two Fareeks showed up. One was dressed in a three piece grey satin suit, with a purple ruffled shirt and two Russian Wolfhounds on leashes. The other was stark naked.

"I'm Fareek O'Houlihan, Time Traveler, and –"

"Wait a second. *I'm* Fareek O'Houlihan, Time Traveler."

"Aren't you a little overdressed for the part?"

"You're not so bad looking yourself, sweetheart."

"Hey, you guys can't be Fareek O'Houlihan. I'm Fareek. You're all impostors."

"No! I'm Fareek!"

"When did the Mets move to Cleveland?"

"Three years from now."

"Oh."

"Wait!"

"Harvey Finstermaker was an ass!"

"No! It was really his father, Harold, who was the ass."

"How can you be disrespectful to Harvey Finstermaker?"

"Because it was really his sister, Shirley, who was responsible for founding the Time Traveler Society."

"Harvey never had a sister!"

"But if we don't blow up New York in the next half hour, Harold Finstermaker will call and interrupt his ex-wife and her husband, Sol, who will die of a heart attack and they'll never conceive Herbie Schumaker, founder of the Time Traveler Society and inventor of the time machine!"

"Wasn't Herbie Schumaker a pitcher for the Cleveland Mets?"

"That's Detroit Mets."

"That's ridiculous. Everybody knows that it was Harvey Finstermaker's mutated pineal gland which enabled him to discover the principle behind time walking and eventually establish the Time Traveler Society."

"Wait!"

Lydia quietly edged her way into the kitchen, and slipped out into the dim hallway through the back door. She walked quickly to the stairwell, where she met another Fareek, dressed in a raincoat and felt hat, and carrying an umbrella. She jumped, but stopped herself before she could let out a screech.

"Excuse me, ma'am."

"Yes?"

"Which way to apartment 4-A? It's very important that I get there quickly – I'm late for an appointment."

Lydia pointed back down the hall. "That way. On the left."

"Thank you."

"That's all right."

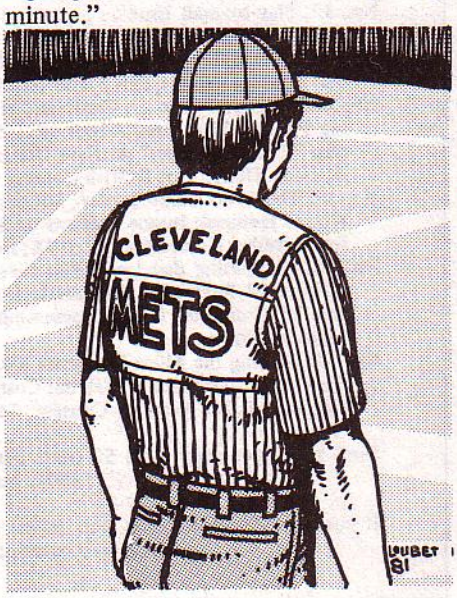
She rushed down the stairs to the first floor, out the back door, into the alley, and jumped into the waiting blue Volkswagen Rabbit. "Whew! That was weird!"

"How many showed up?" asked the portly man in the back seat.

"Seven. Eight if you count the one I ran across in the hallway on the way down. But that was after I had left the apartment."

"Eight. Hm. That may not be good." He sat back in the seat and started punching numbers into his pocket calculator.

Lydia glanced at the driver. "The dummy bomb fooled them all completely, just like you said. They'll be up there arguing for hours. More of 'em, every minute."



TSG BACK ISSUES

Did you miss an article you wanted to read? Some back issues of TSG are still available:

No. 15. Wizard and Olympica designer intros; Robotics in Traveller; Floating Hulks; Ogre Update; Orcs and their Weapons; computer gaming.

No. 16. WarpWar article; Classics Simulated in Melee; Alpha Omega; Demons! (Moties in Melee); 1977 game survey results – and a LOT of reviews.

No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for Imperium, Melee, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; WarpWar fiction.

No. 18. IceWar designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted Melee; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing GM technique).

No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Imperium and WarpWar; Battlefleet Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, Runequest, and Raumkrieg; MicroGame design article.

No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in Melee; designer's optional rules for Ice War; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (wargaming frauds).

No. 21. Interview with Dave Arneson; running a MicroGame tournament; tactics for Ogre and GEV; spaceship miniatures; Black Hole variant rules, putting the Deryni into Melee; more reviews.

No. 22. Ice War tactics; Black Hole physics; PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/fantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.

No. 23. Invasion of the Air Eaters designer's article; Ogre meets Ice War; Sticks & Stones expansion; Vikings and Valde in The Fantasy Trip.

No. 24. Black Hole designer's intro; "The Psychology of Wargaming"; Naval Melee; "The Four-Howitzer Defense in Ogre"; variants for Chitin: I, The Creature that Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.

No. 25. Stellar Conquest issue . . . designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios. Also – strategy in Rivets; benefit-cost analysis for Ice War; "Everyday Life in The Fantasy Trip."

No. 26. Oneworld designer's intro; tactics in GEV; variations on Wizard; computers in wargaming; Life-sized Melee; and a variant that puts human forces into Rivets.

No. 27. Hot Spot's designer's intro; Time Travel; Nuke the Air Eaters (gaming atomic war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT; Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 1; 5 pages of game reviews.

No. 28. 1979 Game Survey results; Overmen in TFT; A Guide to SF/Fantasy Game Publishers; Task Force Games report; Writers' and Artists' guides; 7 pages of reviews; Game Design Part 2; Deus Ex Machina.

No. 29. Fantasy Trip designer's intro; Painting Fantasy Miniatures; Fantasy and SF game magazines surveyed; Game Design Part 3; more Deus Ex Machina; 7 pages of reviews.

No. 30. KUNG FU 2100; Painting Fantasy Miniatures Part II; Index to Game Articles; Game Design Part 4; Programmable Calculators; 10 pages of reviews.

No. 31. "Sam Beowulf"; 1980 Game Software survey; Game Design Part 5; Random Maze Generation; 9 pages of reviews.

No. 32. Traveller issue . . . Alternate Character Types, reviews of play aids, scenarios, and variants; also Game Design Part 6; Deus Ex Machina; "Minus Two Reaction;" software survey update; Yaquinto Games report; 9 pages of reviews.

No. 33. Play-by-mail issue . . . Feature reviews of four PBM games, a Warp War Campaign, Survey of PBM companies; also, Contest Report; Company Report from Schubel and Son; "End Game;" GEV scenario; Game Design Part 7; Deus Ex Machina; The Good Guys, Part I; and 10 pages of reviews.

No. 34. Miniatures issue . . . Cardboard Heroes Designer's Notes, LOTR Miniatures, Painting Fantasy Minatures Advanced Techniques, Survey of miniatures manufacturers; also "The Challenge;" Artifact Designer's Notes and Expansion Rules; 3-D Displays II; Game Design Part 8; Wish Contest winner; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 35. The 1980 Game Survey; Solitaire Ogre; Notes for Novice DMs; The War of the Worlds featured; Insane Variants on Stomp!; Character Contest results; More Psionics for Traveller; Game Design Part IX; Deus Ex Machina; and 9 pages of reviews.

No. 36. Computing damage in Star Fleet Battles; The Fire Web, Artifact for Traveller; a Featured Review of Akalabeth; Eon Products Company Report; The Ten Deadly Sins of Computer Game Programming; Computer Graphics contest winner; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 37. Gaming the Alien; Hyborean Risk; Improved Mission Resolution for Freedom in the Galaxy; Troubles in Valetia; Cosmic Encounter Review; FGU Company Report; Winners of the Weapons Contest; Ten Deadly Sins Part II; and 6 pages of reviews.

Send $2.00 per copy, plus 50 cents per order for postage and handling, to TSG, Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

If you are a TSG subscriber, you can get discounts on back issues. Use the order form on the mailer cover of your subscription copy.

The driver chuckled and moved out into traffic. "Did Fareek number seven show up with his Borzois?"

"I'm not sure – how do you tell them apart?"

"It's easier when you've visited their worlds, I have to admit. Fareek number seven's timeline worships Borzois in much the same way that your ancient Egypt worshipped cats."

"Oh. Well, there was one Fareek with a couple of Russuan Wolfhounds. Does that count?"

"I think we're going to be in trouble," said the man in the back seat.

"Yeah?" Lydia peered at the pocket calculator he held in his hand. "Why?"

"We were only expecting seven Fareeks. If I run through the calculations with eight instead of seven, I find that they will reach 112 half an hour earlier. That means chronoclastic critical mass will be achieved before we get a chance to get far enough away. We might not survive their explosion."

Lydia looked back at the driver. "Is that true?"

"No. The calculations have to based on the number of Fareeks actually *inside* the apartment during the first half hour. We have to take into account a restricted area when calculating critical mass."

"Oh."

"I hope you're right," said the man in the back seat.

"I am."

It was a tense trip out of town.

Until they reached Plainsfield. There, they pulled into the first burger joint they spotted, bought a mess of fish sandwiches and fries, and headed back to the edge of town. They cheered and toasted Queens with paper cups full of Coca-Cola when it finally went. The brief fireball bathed the trio in a bright violet glare.

Harold Finstermaker mutated beautifully.

So did his wife Lydia.

After it was over they stood, arm in arm, admiring their descendent.

"We could never have done it without you, Fareek," said Lydia.

"I feel ashamed that I ever doubted you," said Harold.

Fareek O'Houlihan, Alternate World Traveler, blushed. "Aw, it was nothing."

"Promise us that you'll come to visit."

"Or at least call."

"Sure, I promise."

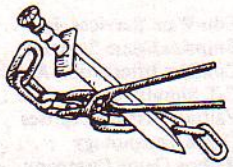
They kept their farewells short. It was too glorious a moment to be dimmed with tears.

The cosmos was safe for Alternatocracy.

FEATURED REVIEW:

TIME WAR

by



Forrest Johnson

Yaquinto is the publisher of TIME WAR, a good game that might have been great.

The subject is almost unique. Each of 2 to 4 players controls an autocratic government, ruthlessly trying to alter history for its own benefit. "History" is represented by a colorful game map. There are concentric circles to divide the various epochs, and radial lines ("time flow lines") to indicate alternate courses of history. There is always one "time flow arrow" counter in each epoch to mark the ever-changing direction if history.

Briefly put, the object of the game is to line up the arrows on your home time line, thereby insuring the triumph of your alternatocracy. You draw mission cards (e.g., "Sigmund Freud must not be potty trained until the age of three."), and send agents back to the appropriate epoch. If nothing goes wrong, your agents will alter the flow of time, moving the time flow arrows in the desired direction.

But almost anything can go wrong. Time projectors vary in efficiency, but even the best will occasionally leave an agent stranded in a strange era. The agents also vary in ability. A bad roll will send history lurching off in an unwished direction.

All missions are plotted in advance. All changes are cumulative. A change in the distant past will affect all subsequent epochs. History can get a bad case of whiplash, if two or three players happen to be pushing it in the same direction. By the middle of the game, arrows are scattered all over the board, and players are groaning as their efforts cancel each other, or work unwittingly to someone else's advantage.

Supporting the main action, there are a lot of intriguing little subgames. For example, when competing agents land in the same era, they shoot it out. Things can get exciting when two big expeditions run into each other. Towards the end of the game, play becomes cutthroat. Players assign guards to protect their temporal turf, and send "seek & destroy" missions to seize other time lines.

Meanwhile, the home front is always busy. There is a flowchart routine for training agents, with quantity vs. tradeoffs. Optional rules allow for budgeting, research and improved technology.

Like I said, TIME WAR could have been a great game. Maybe it *was* . . . or *will be.* If I could only get a hold of a projector . . .

Mission – 1979. Convince Steve Peek his new company should establish a reputation for quality. Teach him about blindtesting. Show him how to write game rules more lucid than a trigonometry text.

Mission – 1980. The second printing of TIME WAR must include some improvements besides a prettier box. Sure, it's the package that sells, but the contents are what draw repeated business. At least straighten out the obvious inconsistencies in the rules. Also, make sure the game includes some decent screens. (The present ones would hide nothing from an average-sized vole.)

Mission – 1981. Get out some errata. Also, take advantage of the talent available in this period to rewrite the rules for the next edition. That will take a little time away from work on new releases, but it will give your customers the (not altogether ill-founded) notion that you give a damn about them. Gamers aren't dumb. If you care about them, they'll care about you.

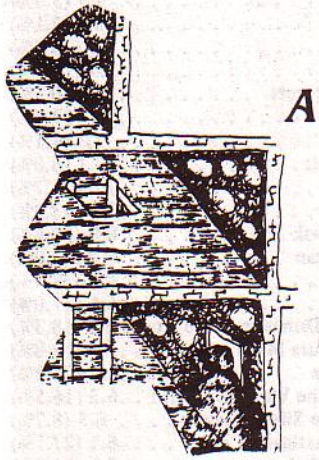
(Hey! We don't need a projector for that last mission!)

TIME WAR (Yaquinto Publications); $14.00. Designed by Steven J. Peek. Box includes 21" x 27" cardstock map, 16-page rulebook, 400 die-cut counters, 36 cards, pad of turn sheets, plastic tray, 2 reference sheets, dice. 2-4 players; playing time 2-3 hours. Published 1979.

California Pacific Computer Co. *Just $34.95 On Diskette*

Presents

Akalabeth



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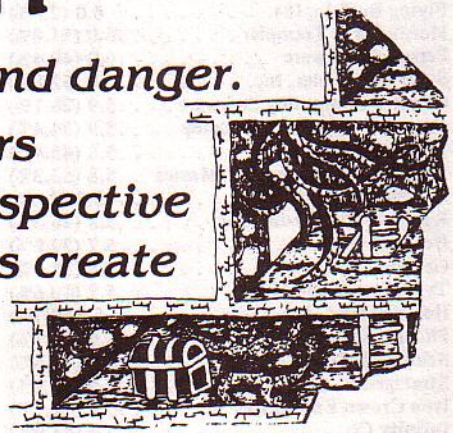

For Apple II with 48K and Applesoft R.O.M.

Available only through local computer stores.

1980 GAME SURVEY RESULTS

E. Barrington & D. Loubet

The 1980 Game Survey appeared in the January issue (35) of TSG. 218 replies were received. Readers were asked to rate the publishers, magazines, and games on a scale of 1-9, with 9 being the highest. If they had never heard of a game, they were asked to give the game (or whatever) an X. The percentage following the rating represents "X" results – people who never heard of it.

PUBLISHERS

California Pacific Computer Co. . .8.3 (54.1%)
Big Five Software 8.0 (51.9%)
Game Designers' Workshop . . . . . 7.6 (.9%)
Automated Simulations 7.5 (32.1%)
Powersoft, Inc. 7.5 (44.5%)
Strategic Simulations, Inc. 7.4 (39.9%)
Steve Jackson Games 7.3 (4.1%)
Metagaming 7.2 (1.4%)
Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc. 7.2 (8.3%)
Games Workshop 7.1 (39.4%)
Gamelords, Ltd. 7.0 (44.1%)
International Gamers Association .7.0 (39.9%)
Muse Software 7.0 (44.0%)
The Software Factory 7.0 (45.0%)
Gameshop 6.9 (45.9%)
Midkemia Press 6.9 (48.6%)
Task Force Games 6.9 (4.1%)
Yaquinto Publishing, Inc. 6.9 (2.8%)
Clemens & Associates 6.8 (46.8%)
Detroit Gaming Center 6.8 (46.3%)
Avalon Hill . . . . . 6.7 (.9%)
Baron Publishing 6.7 (40.4%)
Fantasy Games Unlimited 6.6 (13.8%)
Chaosium 6.5 (5.5%)
Judges Guild 6.5 (3.2%)
Simulations Software 6.5 (38.5%)
The Gamemaster 6.5 (39.0%)
Simulations Canada 6.4 (29.4%)
Simulations Publications, Inc. . . . 6.4 (5.0%)
The Software Exchange 6.4 (36.2%)
Discovery Games 6.3 (27.5%)
Programma International, Inc. 6.3 (45.9%)
TSR Hobbies 6.2 (2.8%)
Instant Software 6.1 (39.9%)
Superior Models 6.1 (28.4%)
Eon Products 6.0 (15.1%)
Flying Buffalo, Inc. 6.0 (2.3%)
McAllister & Trampier 6.0 (51.8%)
Personal Software 6.0 (40.4%)
Synergistic Solar, Inc. 6.0 (52.8%)
Creative Computing Software 5.9 (26.1%)
Creative Wargames Workshop 5.9 (34.4%)
The Mishler Co. 5.8 (45.4%)
Uncontrollable Dungeon Master . .5.8 (53.3%)
Zocchi Distributors 5.8 (2.8%)
Rainbow Computing, Inc. 5.8 (46.3%)
De Jager & Co. 5.7 (32.6%)
Group One 5.7 (38.1%)
Tyr Gamemakers, Ltd. 5.7 (43.6%)
Heritage USA, Inc. 5.6 (8.7%)
Phoenix Games 5.6 (21.1%)
Schubel & Son 5.5 (11.5%)
Stratagems 5.5 (45.9%)
Iron Crown Enterprises 5.4 (41.7%)
Infinity Co. 5.4 (44.0%)
Edu-Ware Services, Inc. 5.3 (37.2%)
Emprise Game Systems 5.2 (40.8%)
Conflict Interaction Associates . . .5.0 (39.9%)
C-T Simulations 5.0 (50.0%)
Fantasy Art Enterprises 5.0 (47.7%)
Game Technology 5.0 (50.5%)
Balboa Game Company 4.8 (36.2%)
West Coast Games 4.8 (40.4%)
Dimension Six 4.5 (18.3%)
Grimoire Games 4.5 (24.8%)
World Campaigns 4.5 (50.0%)
Excalibre Games 4.4 (10.1%)
Fantasy Productions, Inc. . . . . 4.3 (33.5 %)
Argon Games 4.0 (51.9%)
Family Pastimes 4.0 (49.1%)
Future & Fantasy Games 4.0 (45.4%)
Game Room Productions, Ltd. . . .4.0 (50.9%)
Morningstar Publishing, Co. 4.0 (43.1%)
International Team Games 3.9 (43.1%)
Quality Software 3.5 (45.9%)
Nimrod Game Development 3.3 (41.7%)
Gamemasters Publishers Assn. . . .3.2 (42.7%)

MAGAZINES

Rated on the 1-9 scale. The first percentage is the number of respondents reading the magazine regularly. The second is the number of respondents who never heard of it.

The Space Gamer . . . . . .7.9 (72.5%; .5%)
The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society .7.6 (22.0%; 2.8%)
Dragon 6.5 (29.4%; 2.8%)
White Dwarf 6.5 (10.6%; 6.9%)
Different Worlds 6.4 (14.7%; 16.5%)
The Gryphon . . . . . 6.3 (?; 19.3%)
Sorcerers Apprentice 6.4 (13.3%; 10.6%)
The General 6.0 (17.9%; 5.5%)
Ares . . . . . 5.4 (?; 3.7%)
The Dungeoneer/Judges Guild Journal . . .4.8 (7.8%; 10.1%)
Flying Buffalo Quarterly . . . . 4.8 (?; 35.8%)

GAME TYPES

Fantasy Role-Playing Games 7.3
"Micro"-sized games 7.1
Moderate-sized games 7.1
Space Games 7.0
SF Tactical Games 6.8
SF Role-Playing Games 6.8
SF Strategic Games 6.5
Fantasy Role-Playing Supplements 6.3
Fantasy Tactical Games 6.2
SF Role-Playing Supplements 6.1
Computer Space Games 6.1
SF Board Games 6.0
Computer Adventure Games 6.0
Computer Wargames 6.0
Historical Games 5.9
Fantasy Strategic Games 5.8
Fantasy Boardgames 5.5
PBM Games 5.2
SF Tactical Miniatures Games 4.8
Fantasy Miniatures Games 4.7
Space Miniatures Games 4.6
"Monster" games 4.4
Card Games 4.1

SPACE GAMES

Dark Stars 8.0 (3.7%)
Imperium 7.5 (4.6%)
Stellar Conquest 7.4 (3.2%)
Star Fleet Battles 7.2 (2.8%)
Starfire 6.9 (6.0%)
Godsfire 6.6 (8.7%)
Shooting Stars 6.6 (14.7%)
Timelag 6.5 (33.5)
Belter 6.3 (7.7%)
Dark Nebula 6.3 (6.4%)
Warp War 6.3 (2.3%)
Starforce 5.9 (4.1%)
Double Star 5.8 (8.3%)
Battlefleet Mars 5.7 (3.7%)
Outreach 5.6 (8.3%)
Second Empire 5.3 (25.7%)
Nebula 19 . . . . . .4.8 (26.4%)
Starfall 4.5 (11.5%)
Vector 3 . . . . . 4.0 (5.5%)
World Killer 3.4 (6.9%)

SF TACTICAL GAMES

G.E.V. . . . . 7.8 (.9%)
Ogre 7.7 (1.8%)
Azhanti High Lightning 7.6 (6.4%)
Asteroid 7.1 (7.8%)
Snapshot 6.6 (5.0%)
The Awful Green Things from Outer Space 6.5 (3.7%)
The Creature that Ate Sheboygan . 6.5 (5.0%)
Starship Troopers 6.5 (4.5%)
Intruder 6.4 (11.5%)
Ice War 6.3 (2.8%)
Marine: 2002 . . . . . 6.3 (7.3%)
Space Warrior 6.3 (34.9%)
Kung Fu 2100 . . . . . 6.2 (1.4%)
Robots 6.2 (12.3%)
Dimension Demons 6.1 (15.1%)
Hot Spot 6.1 (4.1%)
Time Tripper 5.9 (10.6%)
Star Soldier 5.6 (8.3%)
Wreck of the BSM Pandora 5.2 (8.7%)
Artifact 5.1 (5.5%)
War in the Ice 4.9 (10.6%)
Titan Strike 4.6 (9.6%)

SF STRATEGIC GAMES

Bloodtree Rebellion 7.0 (11.5%)
Freedom in the Galaxy 6.1 (10.1%)
Invasion of the Air Eaters . . . . . 6.0 (4.6 %)
The War of the Worlds 5.2 (7.3%)

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING SUPPLEMENTS

Cults of Prax 7.7 (17.4%)
Death Test II 7.7 (5.5%)
Cities 7.6 (32.1%)
Death Heart 7.4 (34.4%)
Grail Quest 7.4 (11.0%)
Swords & Sorcerers 7.4 (20.2%)
City of Carse 7.3 (32.6%)
Death Test 7.3 (4.1%)
Tollenkar's Lair 7.1 (6.0%)
Pharoah 7.0 (41.7%)
Saurians 7.0 (23.4%)
C&S Sourcebook 6.9 (18.8%)
Arena of Khazan 6.8 (22.9%)
Circle of Ice 6.8 (28.4%)
Duck Tower 6.6 (17.0%)
The Toughest Dungeon in the World 6.5 (18.3%)
Book of Treasure Maps 6.3 (18.8%)
City of Terrors 6.3 (24.3%)
City State of the World Emperor . .6.3 (16.5%)
Treasure of the Silver Dragon 6.3 (8.7%)
Escape from Astigar's Lair 6.1 (27.1%)
Hellpits of Nightfang 6.1 (28.0%)

Arden 5.8 (33.0%)
Gateway Bestiary 5.7 (25.7%)
World of Greyhawk 5.7 (11.9%)
Broken Tree Inn 5.6 (18.8%)
Queen of the Demonweb Pits 5.6 (18.3%)
Wilderlands of High Fantasy 5.6 (22.5%)
Plunder 5.4 (34.4%)
Skinwalkers & Shapeshifters 5.4 (32.1%)
All the World's Monsters 5.3 (13.3%)
Sword of Hope 5.3 (27.5%)
Wizard's Aide 5.3 (34.4%)
Abyss 5.2 (30.7%)
Compleat Fantasist 5.0 (26.1%)
Fortress Ellendar 5.0 (28.0%)
Goblin Lake 5.0 (17.9%)
Mines of Keridav 5.0 (31.2%)
Slave Pits of the Undercity 4.7 (26.6%)
Moorguard 4.0 (28.4%)
Nine Doctrines of Darkness 4.0 (32.6%)
Manual of Aurania 2.5 (39.0%)

SPACE MINIATURES

Starfleet Wars 6.6 (21.1%)
Star Fleet Battle Manual 6.0 (9.6%)
Sigma Omega 5.9 (28.4%)
Alien Space 5.0 (16.0%)

SF TACTICAL MINIATURES

Strike Team Alpha 6.3 (11.5%)
Space Marines 6.2 (15.1%)
Star Commandos 5.9 (24.8%)
MAATAC 5.3 (22.5%)
Final Frontier 5.0 (18.8%)
Galactic Grenadiers 4.6 (12.4%)
Laser Tank 4.5 (21.5%)

FANTASY MINIATURES

Emerald Tablet 7.0 (27.5%)
Witches Cauldron 6.5 (18.3%)
Knights & Magick 6.0 (22.0%)
Caverns Deep 5.9 (15.1%)
Crypt of the Sorcerer 4.6 (24.3%)
Chainmail 4.4 (14.2%)
Swords & Spells 4.3 (19.3%)

COMPUTER SPACE GAMES

Galaxy Invasion 8.0 (30.3%)
Starfleet Orion 7.4 (17.9%)
Battlestar 7.0 (39.4%)
Bill Budge's Space Album 6.8 (39.9%)
Super Invasion/Space War 6.6 (24.3%)
Galactic Empires 6.4 (1.4%)
Super Galactic Battles 6.0 (33.5%)
Trek-80 . . . . . .6.0 (22.5%)
Time Trek 5.4 (27.5%)
Planet Miners 5.3 (20.2%)
Stellar Trek 5.0 (35.5%)
Cosmic Patrol 4.0 (36.7%)
Cosmic Trader 4.0 (35.3%)
Starcruiser 4.0 (34.4%)
Space 3.5 (34.9%)
Parsector V 3.0 (39.9%)

COMPUTER ADVENTURE GAMES

Tomb of Terror 7.5 (35.8%)
Dunjonquest 7.2 (18.3%)
Rescue at Rigel 6.9 (22.9%)
Beneath Apple Manor 6.4 (22.5%)
Akalabeth 5.7 (34.4%)
Dungeon of Doom 5.3 (32.6%)
Devil's Dungeon 5.0 (36.2%)
Dungeon Explorer 4.5 (34.9%)
Escape from the Death Planet . . .4.5 (39.0%)
Swordquest 4.3 (31.2%)
Lost Dutchman's Gold 3.3 (32.6%)

COMPUTER WARGAMES

Computer Ambush 7.1 (25.7%)
Computer Bismarck 6.7 (17.9%)
Global War 6.0 (29.4%)
Winged Samurai 5.5 (33.9%)
Ants 5.0 (40.4%)
North American Convoy Raider . .4.3 (17.4%)

PBM GAMES

Universe II 7.2 (27.1%)
Pellic Quest 6.3 (19.3%)
Wofan 6.3 (34.9%)
StarWeb 6.2 (7.8%)
The Assassin's Quest 6.0 (12.4%)
Star Cluster Omega 6.0 (28.4%)
Warp Force One 5.7 (19.7%)
Nuclear Destruction 5.5 (19.3%)
Battle Plan 5.1 (30.3%)
Star Master 5.1 (17.9%)
Galaxy II 5.0 (22.0%)
The Tribes of Crane 5.0 (11.0%)
Empyrean Challenge 4.7 (16.0%)
Arena Combat 3.8 (31.6%)
Lords of Valetia 1.8 (16.5%)

CARD GAMES

Nuclear War 6.9 (16.1%)
Sqwurm 4.4 (26.6%)
O.K. Corral 4.3 (33.0%)

SPACE GAMER READER QUESTIONS

The second part of the survey dealt with what our readers wanted to see in TSG, and how they liked or disliked the various contents.

How helpful are TSG reviews in buying a game?
Very: 64% Somewhat: 35% Not at all: 1%

Do you consult TSG before buying a game?
Often: 62% Sometimes: 30% Rarely: 8%

CONTENTS

Rated on the 1-9 scale. Readers were asked to rate "the following KINDS OF MATERIAL as contents for TSG."

Capsules 8.0
Game reviews in general 7.8
Annual Game Survey 7.8
Featured reviews 7.2
News & Plugs 7.0
Game variant articles 6.7
Artwork 6.6
News about gaming companies 6.6
Complete game adventures/scenarios 6.6
Strategy hints for specific games 6.5
Letters to the editor 6.5
Designer's articles 6.4
Advertising 6.3
News about tournaments & clubs 6.3
Contests 6.3
Cartoons 6.2
Color artwork 6.1
Editorials 6.1
Complete games in some issues 5.8
Game-related fiction 5.8
Continuing comic strips 5.7
Humorous articles 5.6
Science fiction 5.4
Articles on how to design games 5.4
Science fact articles specifically related to SF gaming 5.4
Monsters for role-playing games 5.4
Articles on computer gaming 5.4
Convention news 5.4
Program listings 5.2
Historical fact articles specifically related to FRP gaming 5.2
Reviews of miniature figures 5.1
Interviews with designers and publishers . .5.0
Convention reports 4.8
Accounts of actual game sessions 4.6
Miniatures gaming 4.6
Articles on miniature construction 4.5
Articles on wargames other than SF&F . . .3.9
Science fact articles in general 3.8
SF movie reviews 3.6
Fantasy movie reviews 3.6
Upcoming SF&F book news 3.5
Historical fact articles on specific battles . .3.4
SF book reviews 3.4
Fantasy book reviews 3.4
SF fandom coverage 3.1
Articles on boardgames 3.1
Military history book reviews 2.4

LIKES AND DISLIKES

Readers were asked to fill in their own "most want to see" and "most do not want to see" types of material. Responses were varied. The "most want to see" answers saw a large number of "more variants and/or strategic articles." Readers also wanted hints on playing specific games, and many said merely "I like TSG the way it is. Keep it up." The "most not want to see" answers were more varied. A lot of people said merely, "anything not SF or fantasy." Some came up with "Computer stuff – I don't have a computer." Also, bad art, bad fiction, "bad" anything, apparently. The stress seemed to be on the quality of material we publish.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

84.7% of the respondents subscribe to TSG. On the average, these readers have subscribed for 2.4 years each.

Average age: 27

Average income: $17,000. (Many make more, but some are students with little or no income.)

Average number of readers per copy: 3.1.

Years of formal education: 0-8: 12%; 9-12: 16%; 13-14: 42%; 15-16: 15%; 17+: 15%.

54.4% of our readers are presently students.

27.9% own a home computer.

51.7% *more* have access to a computer.

SUBJECTS OF INTEREST

Readers were asked to check the subjects that interested them. The percentage is the number of respondents who checked that area.

SF games 57.3%
Role-playing games 55.0%
Fantasy games 53.2%
Computer games 34.4%
Historical games 33.9%
Contemporary wargames 29.8%
Historical simulations 25.7%
Contemporary simulations 24.8%
Play-by-mail games 24.3%
Miniatures gaming 24.3%
Plastic model building 14.7%
Miniature dioramas 10.6%

For those who wonder why we don't have a *monthly* survey . . . surveys are a pain. They are to man-hours as the proverbial gopher-hole is to water. We missed our deadline this issue in large

part because the editor, publisher, typesetter, and even art director spent about a week fiddling with survey forms.

Evidently, a lot of you agree that surveys are a pain. Only 218 of you responded, which is something like 1% of our readership, and a decrease of 178 from last year. Apparently the number of responses is inversely proportional to the length of the survey.

It was a long survey, 50% longer than last year. The number of game categories increased from 12 to 19. The number of game companies shot up from 27 to 82.

For all that, it was *not* a complete survey. We had to be representative rather than complete – otherwise, issue 35 would have been our "Special Survey Issue." Our apologies to the gamers (and publishers!) whose feelings were hurt by the omissions.

Well, few people like to fill out surveys, but a lot of people like to read them. (The survey itself ranked 7.8.) Those who returned their forms were supposed to rate the games on a scale of 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest. An "X" indicated that person had never heard of that particular game – "X"s have been tabulated as a percentage following each rating. (Bear in mind, a 40% "not known" response does not necessarily mean "known to 60%" – some people were a little slow to use "X"s.)

There are no perfect "9"s here, and no "1"s – we struck them on the grounds of an insufficient sampling. There *are* a suspicious number of whole-number ratings left, perhaps more than chance alone would produce. Is *Dark Stars* really the hottest space game on the market? (Don't ask us; we're still looking for a reviewer.)

Also, there were a lot of let's-rate-us responses. The highest-ranking company was something called Daystar West Media Productions. It isn't listed because we're not sure it exists; it doesn't answer mail sent to its supposed address. On the other hand, there were a number of let's-get-these-guys ratings – enough to pull down the averages on some pretty creditable companies.

Some of you may be puzzled by the number of high ratings. Most games got at least a "5." The reason is that many of the least popular games didn't make the survey in the first place.

It is also a little surprising that five of the top-ranked companies specialize in software. This may reflect the increasing popularity of computer games. (About three-fourths of you now have a computer or access to one.) On the other hand, it may be that only enthusiastic computer buffs rated those companies at all.

The "one" that is not a computer company is GDW. While one can get paranoid visions of GDW staffers sitting around late at night, filling out dozens of survey forms, it is easier to believe GDW came out on top because of genuine merit. Certainly its games are highly rated.

Lastly, in reading this survey, you should remember this is a survey of TSG readers and, for the most part, subscribers. It is not at all surprising that TSG finished first in the magazine category. A survey, say, of *Ares* readers would have had a different result. That doesn't mean that our ratings, in general, are much different; in most cases they parallel those published in *Ares*. TSG readers apparently tend to rate Metagaming products a bit higher, and SPI products a point or so lower. But when you compare the ratings for, say, GDW's *Imperium* or TFG's *Star Fleet Battles*, you find a great similarity between the results of this survey and those run in SPI's magazines.

COMMENTS

For every comment it seemed there was a counter-comment. Some examples:

The Survey

"I am surprised at the jump in the number of games, companies, etc."

"This one was too long and tough. Next one shoud be 2 pages max."

"Next time, put more games on the list, or let us put down our own."

The Magazine

"The overall level of material in *The Space Gamer* has improved since the change in ownership. I hope this improvement continues."

"Your magazine has gone downhill since MGC gave it up."

"I think ever since Steve Jackson took over TSG, there have been nothing but improvements in the magazine, customer relations, and graphics. You're doing a great job and keep up the good work."

"TSG was much more informative and friendly back in the 'old days' (issues 1-25)."

"I feel that the subscription rate is too high." (*This was a common plaint, usually accompanied by comparisons with bimonthly or quarterly publications.*)

Reviews

"Keep up the great capsule reviews, but how about increasing the number of featured reviews."

"Not so many capsule or featured reviews in TSG. Even low quality articles are better than reviews."

Contests

"The traps contest was great, as are most of your contests."

"*The Space Gamer* contests are getting pretty bad."

Computer Gaming

"Would rather see less on computer gaming."

"I especially like Deus Ex Machina."

"Please, less computer articles in TSG. They are fine for those who have access to computers but such articles are completely worthless to the rest of us."

"Even though I don't have access to a computer, I need your reviews to help decide what to buy and where to get software when I'm ready to get one. *Creative Computing* stinks in this department; you are the real leaders here."

Miniatures

"You really shouldn't get into reviewing miniatures. *Different Worlds* does a great job of that already."

"The *Different Worlds* practice of detailed reviews of 25mm figures is excellent and an idea you should copy if you want to make me more happy with *The Space Gamer*."

Conclusions

Other than the greatly increased popularity of computer games, the market looks like last year's. Fantasy and s-f are still popular, and little games are more desired than big ones. The top-rated games in each category score better than the category itself does, suggesting that quality of a specific design is more important than the general type of games. An individual company may have some high-rated games and some low-rated games – though in general the rating of a company correlates with the average rating of its games . . . suggesting strongly that company name, as a rule, is not an indicator of design quality. (An exception here is GDW, which had, almost exclusively, winners.)

Reviews got the highest ratings. We'll try to run a few more featured reviews, and to make sure capsule reviews get as much information as possible into a limited space.

Fiction: Some like it, some don't. Our best compromise seems to be VERY strict adherence to the "keep-it-game-related" rule, even if the story is otherwise good. I (SJ) have misgivings about the fiction in this issue, for instance. It's an excellent story, and relates to the *Time War* review, but I wish we had a game scenario for it.

News: Everybody wants more. There were several specific requests for news of Metagaming. We print everything we get from them, as it is . . . but that's limited to new releases and an occasional "upcoming."

Things NOBODY wants include historical material, SF book reviews and movie fandom, et cetera. Obediently, we shall continue to leave this out.

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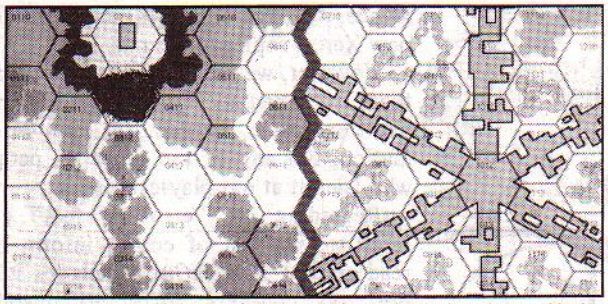
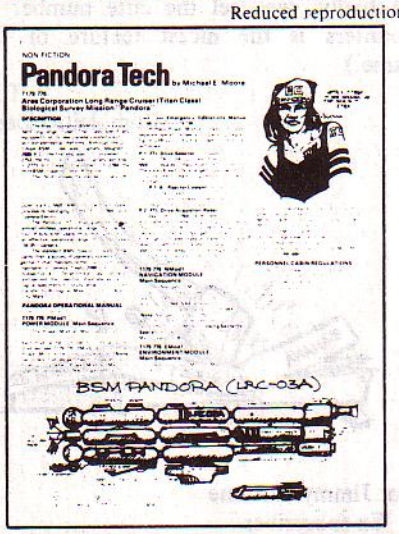
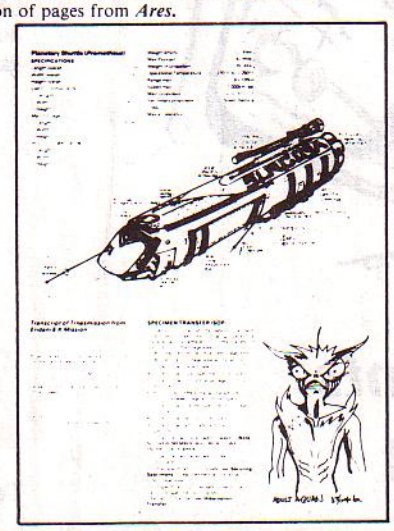


Detail of *Voyage of the Pandora* map and sample playing pieces (100 pieces in game).
Reduced reproduction of pages from *Ares*.





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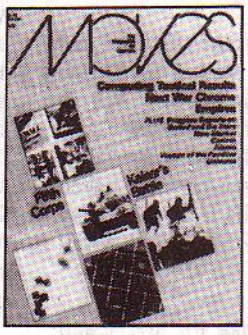

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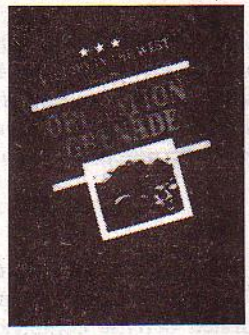

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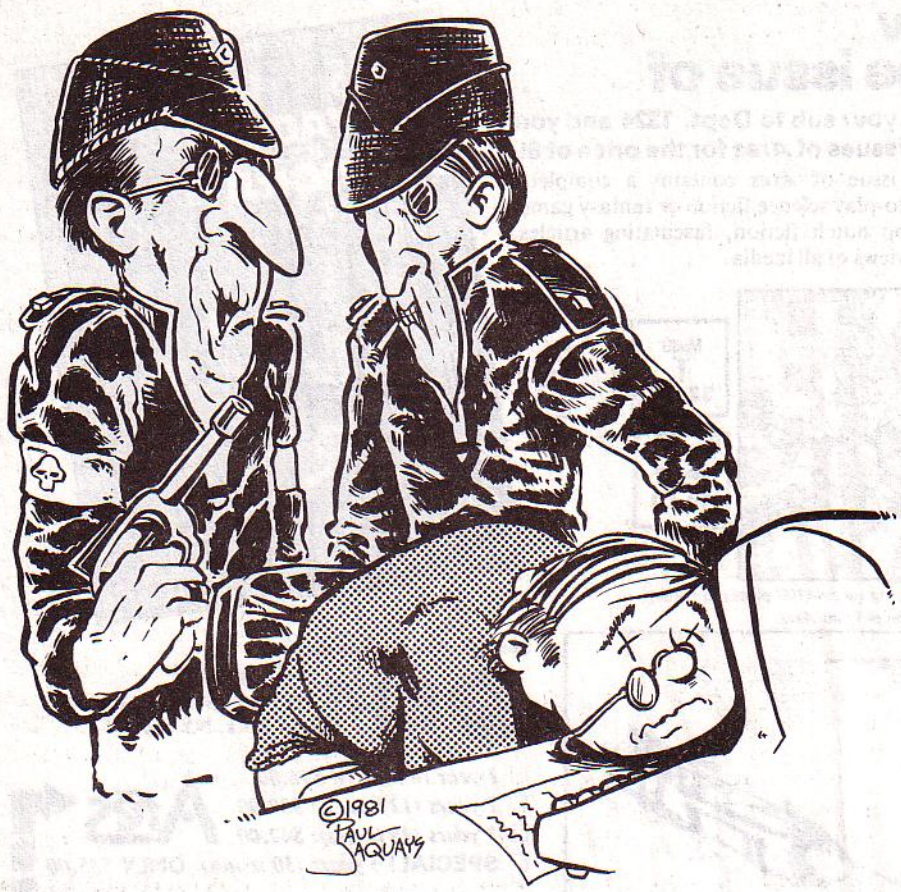


The Complaints Department

WARNING: The following material is fiction. Any resemblance between any character and any person, living or dead, is purely coincidental. Those who take this material seriously do so at their own risk.

It may surprise our readers to learn that *The Space Gamer* is prepared in an abandoned defense complex deep within one of the limestone bluffs of Austin. I am rather new to the Organization, as it is sometimes called, so my security rating is only "Confidential," and I have never known what to make of the people in black uniforms I sometimes see in the corridors, playing with blackjacks and electric cattle prods. Someone told me that they work for the Complaints Department.

All I know is, one day I was carrying some old mailing lists to the shredder and I found it gummed up with a file which was not completely shredded. I believe the contents speak for themselves. And I believe the world should know how TSG really operates. Even now, as I feed this introduction into the terminal, I may hear a knock and . . . What? Wait! AAH!

Got him!

Is he dead?

No, but he won't wake for hours, and he won't remember a thing.

Where's the file?

Damn! It's already set. Stop the press!

Can't. It would take too long to get authorization . . . Why not blow up the printing plant? We could blame it on a competitor.

Too chancy. Look, the terminal mike's still on. Damn.

Hold it. I got it. . . . We'll just put a little note in at the beginning. . . .

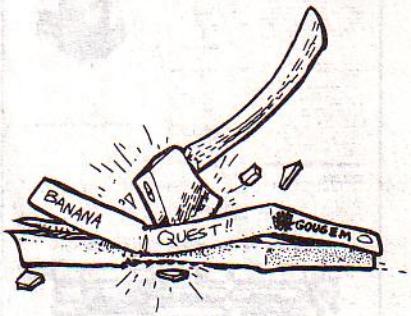
To: Merton Crock
President
Gougem Games

You certainly have reason to be unhappy about our review of *BananaQuest,* your latest release. It is quite probable that the "libelous" statements will hurt your sales. After all, few people would want to buy a game that has "unintelligible rules," and "no play balance," and "gets worse every time I play it." Also, we realize how irked you are by the advice, "Gougem Games should find a new Xerox copier for its map sheets."

However, we had good reason to print these statements. The reviewer did not like your game. Neither, for your information, did any of the other six people who tried it at our playtest session.

Regarding the "error of fact" you refer to, we will of course inform our readers that *BananaQuest* includes 98½, not 100, counters. Sorry, our mistake. (Actually, we feel the cute number of counters is the nicest feature of the game.)

TSG
Complaints Dept.



To: Jimmy Rusome
Ex-subscriber

Okay, punk. They sent you the card with the picture of one of our hit jobs, and they sent you the card with the picture of a collection agent, but you never sent them a check. So they turned the case over to us.

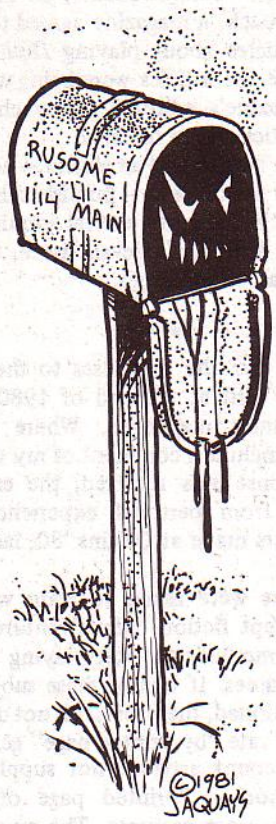
We'll make it short. You resubscribe within 48 hours, or you'll find a catatrope in your mailbox. What's a catatrope? Wait 48 hours and you'll find out, but we don't think you'll be telling anyone else. . . .

TSG
Complaints Dept.

To: Merton Crock
President
Gougem Games

Regarding the recent letter concerning your advertising account:

1. No, we don't think you deserve the 15% agency discount just because you created the Gougem Agency in order to obtain such discounts.



2. We are not surprised to learn that the response to your latest ad has not been very good. A typewritten ad with the lines pasted together crooked is not likely to get the much response in the best of circumstances. If you dealt with a real agency, you would not have these problems.

TSG
Complaints Dept.

To: Vlad Viapitusi
Acrimony Games

In response to your inquiry, no, we do not trade advertising for sweet reviews. When you send us a game for review, you are taking your chances. If you get a bad review, you can: (1) cancel your advertising, (2) send us a nasty letter, or (3) hold your breath until you turn blue. The above methods would all prove equally effective. The only way we have found for a company to guarantee itself consistently good reviews is to publish consistently good games. It's surprising how few people think of this.

No, we would not be interested in an expose of your former employer, Mr. Merton Crock.

According to our Billings & Assassinations Department, you are now three months behind in your accounts. This fact might lead a reasonable person to believe you are insolvent and preparing to file for bankruptcy. While we hope it is not the case, another month arrear might convince us, in which case we would not fail to alert the public.

TSG
Complaints Dept.

To: Fred Lamear
Author

We certainly sympathize with you, following the rejection of your story "Big Fighter-Little Thief." It is true that Mr Johnson did tell you it was "inept," "hackneyed," "a rip-off." However, we do not think it quite fair to call Mr. Johnson "*****" or "* *******." If we did not have "* *******" like Mr. Johnson in the office, we would probably have to hire one.

You are free to submit "Big Fighter-Little Thief" to another publication.

TSG
Complaints Dept.

To: Mr. Fritz Toggle
Superfluous Games

We certainly understand your distress at our failure to print all of the publicity releases you have sent us on your new game *Mystery of the Blivit.* It must be frustrating to go to as much trouble as you have to plug this game, only to find that it gets no more News & Plugs space than any other comparable system.

However, that's the way the ball bounces. We don't print long press releases verbatim just to fill space. A new game is a new game, regardless of hype. If you want an ad, buy it.

Incidentally, if you'd spend half the money on design and components that You've invested in news releases and publicity gimmicks, you'd probably sell more games.

TSG
Complaints Dept.

To: Robert Streeter
Subscriber

You're right. Your last TSG didn't reach you, and it was our fault. We had the address wrong.

Your threat to turn us over to the Postal Inspector if we don't immediately send you a replacement has us all shaking in our boots. Needless to say, it's on the way to you.

If we shoot the manager of the Circulation Department, fire all his assistants, burn down the houses where they live, and sprinkle the rug of their office with salt, will you forgive us?

TSG
Complaints Dept.

BANANA QUEST

It is January, 1942. The German Sixth Army is starving at Stalingrad. You, Hans Helmschtucker, are [illegible] starving too. You hear a call for brave volunteers. Bravely, you volunteer. Somewhere in the underground underworld underneath Stalingrad, the Russians have cached a huge store of provisions, including 2½ million bananas. Only you, Hans Helmschtucker, can find the bananas and save the Reich.

BananaQuest is an innovative game, with rules for NKVD, other VD, mines, ore deposits, exploding sewer gas and seven mythological Russian monsters. All this in a geomorphic box with 98½ [illegible] counters, a 2-color 8½"x11" map, 4 pages of rules, 10 pages of errata, and 2 three-sided dice.

Available only from:

Gougem Games

Selling Your Article

by Lewis Pulsipher

Many of you have thought of writing an article about fantasy or science fiction games. No single magazine is the best forum for every kind of article. This is a report for would-be authors about the professional magazines which cover fantasy or science fiction gaming, based on a questionnaire sent to them at the end of 1980.

It should go without saying that all articles must be typed, double or triple spaced. Editors don't have time to decipher handwriting, nor will typesetters work from untyped manuscripts. Always include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of an unacceptable article. If you can, send a good photocopy rather than the original. About 5% of all unprinted articles won't get back to the author because of postal errors or loss in editorial procedures. (If the article *is* printed, the manuscript definitely is not returned.)

If you intend to write a long article you can save yourself some headaches. Write to one or more magazines describing your ideas. The editor may tell you he already has a similar article, or that it isn't suitable, or he may suggest improvements. (He'll also send a writer's guide, if the magazine has one.) Remember, editors reject articles, not authors. An editor might reject one idea or article you submit but accept another later. Nor are editors infallible. Just as a book as successful as *Watership Down* suffered more than a dozen rejections before a publisher accepted it, so your article might be rejected by several magazines before it is accepted. You may think of your article as a gem of informative clarity, but to the editor it may be just X number of column inches. Whether it is printed may depend more on the subject matter, or even the length, than on the quality of the article. You may also find that your crystal prose has been chopped or altered in the interest of fitting the article into a given amount of space, though this varies from magazine to magazine.

Don't despair if your article is rejected. It *may* be a poor article, but instead it may be only too long, too short, or the wrong subject or approach for the magazine you sent it to. Improve it if you can – some editors may offer suggestions, but don't expect them to – but do send it to another publisher. If you are easily discouraged you'll have a hard time. Unless you're an experienced writer you must be prepared for rejections and requests to rewrite your mateiral.

Don't send the same article to more than one magazine at the same time. If you are impatient you can state a date – about three months hence – after which you'll assume that the article has been rejected, and after that you can send a copy to another magazine.

An article may be "accepted" but never see print. For some reason, though simultaneous submission is considered unethical, it is all right for an editor to accept an article, hold it for more than a year, and then return it unused.

Unless you arrange otherwise, when your article is printed, it will be copyrighted by the magazine, and henceforth the latter will have full control of its use. For example, if your FRP monster is printed and you later want to use the description in a published adventure module you will have to rewrite it entirely or obtain permission from the magazine to use the original. A few magazines (*Different Worlds, Dungeoneer*) have published articles copyrighted by the author, but this may involve some expense. It should also be possible to sell first serial rights only to a magazine; consequently, though the magazine would copyright the article, you would have all rights after it was printed. I know of no one who has done this, though it is common in other fields.

You must recognize that the author is a supplicant and the editor holds the whip. Each magazine seems to have sufficient contributions, and rarely needs to go out of the way to accommodate more contributors. If you write many articles you are likely to have an article accepted but returned over a year later without publication, others delayed 18 months before they're printed, and so on. Let me describe a few frustrating examples from actual experience.

1) An author was asked to write a series of articles about an FRP game for a magazine as rapidly as possible; but for various reasons, the first installment was printed more than 15 months after he submitted the first half of the series.

2) After some discussion of contents and approach, a magazine agreed to print three articles about playing *Diplomacy*. But while the articles were being written, the magazine's editorial policy changed, so the articles were returned.

3) An author had an article – he doesn't know which one! – published in *Dungeoneer*, but despite several inquiries he does not have the relevant issue, though he was paid months ago.

* * *

These are the responses to the questionnaire sent at the end of 1980 to all SF/F games magazines. Where appropriate I include a comment of my own. If no response was received, the entry is derived from personal experience and statements made at Origins '80, last summer.

Editors were asked to state whether they accept fiction, miniadvanture scenarios or modules for role-playing games, or minigames. If one of these subjects is not mentioned, therefore, it is not desired.

A pay rate "by printed page" generally doesn't count artwork not supplied by the author – "printed page of text" might be more accurate. The number of words on a page varies with type size. Generally, I've found, $15-20 a page is a higher rate than 1 cent per word, while *Dungeoneer*'s column rate approximates 1 cent a word. Payment is on publication, not on acceptance; which is to say, you'll probably receive your money some weeks *after* publication. All magazines except *Dungeoneer/JG Journal* give a contributor a copy of the issue where his work appears.

"Wait" is the average time between submission and acceptance or rejection of an article. "Interval" is the average time between acceptance and publication of work. "Not printed" is the percentage of contributions accepted but never printed. If the magazine has a style guide for contributors, this is stated.

ARES, 257 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010. Editors Redmond A. Simonsen, Robert J. Ryer, Michael E. Moore. Print run 18,000, immediate distribution 13,500. Wants short analyses of SF/F games (no reviews), fiction, science fact, historical myth and fantasy articles. Pays 3-6 cents/word for fiction, 2-4 cents/word non-fiction, variable for art: cover $350, interior full page black and white $100. Wait 45 days, interval 2 months. Not printed 1% of articles, 0% art. SASE for style sheet (which is for fiction only). Additional comment: "Fiction should be action-oriented, with strong central conflict and interesting characters; a sense of "strangeness" is desired. Nonfiction should be of interest to gamers in particular. 3,000-7,000 words for fiction, 1,500-

3,000 for non-fiction."

DIFFERENT WORLDS, PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Editor Tadashi Ehara. Print run 5,000, distribution 3,000+. Wants articles on role-playing games (including scenarios) only. Pays 1 cent/word, $20 page for art. Wait 2 months, interval 6-12 months. Not printed 10% articles, ?% art.

DRAGON, PO Box 110, Lake Geneva, Wis 53147. NO RESPONSE RECEIVED. Editors Jake Jaquet, Kim Mohan. Print run: 20,000 as of summer 1980, as much as 45,000 as of January, 1981. Wants most SF/F games material, but miniadventures and minigames produced by TSR staff or by competition. Pays $15-18/printed page. Wait 2-3 months, interval 6-18 months. Not printed unknown; but DRAGON will pay a kill fee of $5-10 for any article which remains in their hands 6 months after being accepted, which you ask to have returned. Style sheet.

THE DUNGEONEER JOURNAL, RR 8 Box 9, 1221 N. Sunnyside Rd., Decatur, IL 62522. NO RESPONSE RECEIVED. Print run 5,000. Editor Chuck Anshell. Wants role-playing game material, fiction. Pays 30 cents/column inch. Wait: the editor told me at Origins '80 that they do not reply to submissions, not even when an SASE is enclosed. Interval at least 6 months.

*THE GENERAL 4517 Hartford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214. Editor Donald Greenwood. Wants only articles on Avalon Hill games, "no limit to word length." Pays $6/column. "Rejected articles will be returned whenever possible."

GRYPHON, PO Box 820, La Puente, CA 91747. NO RESPONSE RECEIVED. Editor Rudy Kraft. Print run for the first issue 5,000. Wants games reviews and critical/analytical material about SF/F boardgames (and possibly role-playing games). Pays in free copies.

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY, PO Box 432, Normal, IL 61761. Editor Loren K. Wiseman. Distribution 7,000+. Wants miniadventures, scenarios, modules and variants of interest to SF gamers in general and *Traveller* players and referees in particular. Pays $5 per page of 600 words, art varies. Wait 4-6 weeks, interval varies. Not printed 10% article, 0% art. SASE for style sheet.

*MOVES, 257 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010. (British writers should send submissions to Charles Vasey, 4 Barton's Drive, Yately Camberley, Surrey, England.) Editors Redmond A. Simonsen, Bob Ryer. Print run 13,000, immediate distribution 11,000. Wants reviews; scenario, variant, and strategy analysis articles on almost any kind of wargame. Pays $8/column. Wait 1-3 months, interval 1-2 months. "With submission, include a stamped, self-addressed postcard with the name of your article on the submission side. Articles and illustrations cannot be returned."

*RICHARD BERG'S REVIEW OF GAMES, 257 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010. Editor Richard Berg. Print run 600, immediate distribution 500. Most of the material in Berg's Review is done on assignment. If you are interested in reviewing games for this newsletter, write to the editor and inquire as to his specific needs at the moment.

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE, c/o Flying Buffalo, Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252. Editors Liz Danforth, Pat Mueller, Michael Stackpole. Print run 5,000, distribution 3,500+. Wants role-playing game material, heroic fantasy fiction, background and reference articles, *Tunnels and Trolls* mini-solitaire adventures, GM modules/scenarios. Pays 1-5 cents/word (art by assignment only). Wait 1-2 months, interval 3-6 months. Not printed 1%. Style sheet for artists only. Comment: standard *non*-fiction rate is 1 cent a word. Material suitable only for one game, unless it's *Tunnels and Trolls*, is unlikely to be accepted.

THE SPACE GAMER, PO Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760. Editor Forrest Johnson. Print run 6,000, distribution 5,700. Wants all SF/F games material and game-related fiction. Pays 1 cent/word, 3 cents/word for pro fiction, for art $1/col. in. inside, $60 up for cover, $10 mailer cartoon. Wait 1 month, interval 3 months (4 months for art). Not printed 20%, about 30% art. Style sheet. Comment: "TSG is owned by Steve Jackson, but we are not exclusively, or even primarily, interested in his games. We try to cover the whole SF/Fantasy hobby."

WHITE DWARF, 1 Dalling Road, London W6 England. Editors Ian Livingstone, Andy Slack. Print run 13,000, distribution 11,000. Wants SF/F role-playing games and figures, boardgame articles, scenarios, minigames. Pays $20/printed page, art $70 cover. Wait 1 month, interval 6 months (4 months for art). Not printed 10% (art 0%).

WYRM'S FOOTNOTES, PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Editor Charlie Krank. Print run 1,500, distribution 1,000. Wants articles about Chaosium games. Pays in free copies only. Wait 1 month, interval 6 months.

**EDITOR'S NOTE — We don't want to put words in Lew's mouth, but he left out a couple of publications we thought should be included. The designated listings were pieced together from available information.*

THE TRIBES OF CRANE

You, task chief of the Leopard people wandering tribe of crane, sit in your great wagon awaiting news from your swift searching outriders. Suddenly hoof beats approach. The outriders leap from their mounts to your wagon flushed with excitement for they know full well the meaning of their news. But one sector to the North the great merchant caravan of the Impala people has been spotted. The order is given, "To arms... to arms!" You snap your orders, "Gather my captains of hundreds. Let all know the tactic will be enfilade right. Now my arms, my mount." You heard that Kate, chief of the Impala people, has chosen a stand and defend tactic twice before; will he again? You know also that the Impala people are fine warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no raid of the strong on the weak, but rather a mighty clash of the **TRIBES OF CRANE . . .**

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Send to: **Schubel & Son**
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Sacramento, CA 95821

The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

As a new player you will start as the chief of one of the many wandering tribes of Crane. Perhaps your tribe will be of the Sea people or Caravan merchants.

As chief you will know many secrets of your people and their lands, but there will be much you have still to learn of the lost secrets of Crane. It will be you who decide if your people will remain in their familiar homeland or begin a journey to new lands as you strive to increase your herds, train warriors, and learn of the ancient lost secrets that can move your people toward prosperity and dominance.

The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the permanent ice of the polar regions, to the deserts, and tropical forests of the equator.

Cities dot the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and KingLords.

The creatures of Crane are as varied as its geography. Cattle, goats, and the caribou are the mainstay of the tribes, depending on the geography. But horses and the great mancarrying war hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many undomesticated creatures also inhabit Crane such as the Euparkeria, a huge bipedal lizard that feeds on cattle in the grasslands of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade, and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the antagonists, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The games objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria, depending upon the type of tribe, and thus obtain points. Players try to obtain high average points per turn thus placing new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The Tribes of Crane may be entered for $10.50 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are $3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased for $3.50.

designer's notes for

Lords of UnderEarth

by Keith Gross

LORDS OF UNDEREARTH is an underground labyrinth adventure, one of the most popular subjects in fantasy gaming. It uses tried-and-true wargaming techniques such as odds-ratio combat, movement allowances, and terrain effects charts.

The game is set in an underground dwarf city. The five scenarios depict battles and other actions from throughout the city's long history. The scale is much larger than TFT or D&D; most units represent groups of thirty people, and hexes represent 30 meters. The rooms and corridors are city-sized rather than dungeon-sized. Limited intelligence rules are important, as is morale. "Napoleonic warfare in a dungeon," one playtester called it.

History

The first incarnation of LORDS OF UNDEREARTH saw life in 1975. I had been playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, after long experience with Avalon Hill wargames. I liked the ideas of D&D, but was annoyed with the ambiguities of the first edition. I tried to design a game which would combine the subject matter of D&D with conventional wargame mechanics. Unfortunately, playtesting showed that this first version was too complicated, and more important, the game nearly always became a stalemate once the defender blocked the passageways. An army can't mount a good attack on a front only a few feet across.

LORDS OF UNDEREARTH collected dust until early 1978. I had been involved with playtesting at Metagaming, and had done the editing for *Olympica,* and now I wanted to design a MicroGame. I did some work on simplifying and re-designing LOU, but then I got busy with final exams, and then *Ice War,* and I forgot about it.

Work began again in December, 1979, while I was a full-time member of Metagaming's staff. I dusted off LOU, and tried to make it into a quick-playing, easy-to-learn MicroGame. Some new design concepts solved the stalemate problem and made the game more fluid, and also greatly simplified it. LOU went out for playtesting and went through a few more rules drafts, and was finished by the end of February, 1980, when I left Metagaming.

Rationale

The map depicts the central portions of the dwarven city of UnderEarth. It is geomorphic: it can be cut into thirds and rearranged or expanded if players wish. UnderEarth has an East Gate and West Gate, leading to non-underground areas, each with an overlooking battlement. It has the Great Hall in the center, designed as a gathering place for the dwarves. North of it loops a wide and level "turnpike" corridor, used by caravans as a short-cut through the mountains. A subterranean lake, in the northwest, provides a water supply. The East Hall, with a pit and several locking doors, provides an interior defense. The barracks area in the southeast is the dwarves' living area. Also included are the throne room, a dungeon, mines, a stairway to the top of the mountain, and numerous smaller rooms. UnderEarth is loosely patterned after Moria in *Lord of the Rings,* though it is smaller.

The counter mix includes a small army of dwarves and unarmed dependents, as well as individual captains, sentries, and a scout; and the dwarf lord. Similar, but smaller, forces of humans and orcs are included. Other units are a large dragon, a single company of goblins, and miscellaneous individual creatures.

Mechanics

An important concept which provides a great deal of the game's flavor is alerting. Usually, defending units begin the game with "unalerted" markers on them, and cannot move until either an enemy unit or an already-alerted friendly unit moves adjacent to them. This prevents units from being moved in a strategically useful manner before they even know that a battle is going on. Sentries have a vital role, because they can use horns or drums to alert friendly units up to four hexes away. Adding to the "fog of war" is the fact that units are often inverted.

Infiltration is a special type of movement. When two units are in a melee, the attacker can go through the defender, in some cases.

Combat uses a conventional odds-ratio system. Companies and individuals both

have combat strengths, but those of companies are higher. Companies suffer severe penalties when attacking in narrow corridors and tunnels, because only a few of their 30 people can fight at a time. The CRT is rather biased towards the attacker, because this makes the game more fluid.

In fantasy combat, bravery and heroism should be as important as simple force-of-arms. This is reflected in the morale rules, which gives odds-columns shifts when leaders are with companies and when individuals are involved, alone, in combat against companies. The leaders, sentries, and scouts, as well as the creatures, are stronger and bolder (or more ferocious) than average warriors in the companies. For the dragon, particularly, the element of fear is more important than the actual (pardon the pun) firepower.

A rules section was added for combining LOU with *In the Labyrinth*. These are guidelines for GMs rather than explicit rules, for the most part, but being a GM takes work and creativity anyway. The "Passage of UnderEarth" scenario of LOU might make an interesting ITL adventure. The 14-hex dragon and huge groups of orcs will be too strong for most parties to fight, but UnderEarth offers lots of escape routes and hiding places.

Absent from LOU are magic and missile weapons. The original magic system was too complicated, and I didn't have time to develop a new system which was both simple and compatible with *The Fantasy Trip*. The game works well without magic. Multi-hex missile fire was dropped because the line-of-sight rules got to be a mess. The effects of doors, curving interiors, etc. all had to be pinned down. For the same reason, alerting and the inverted-units rules are based on adjacency of hexes rather than line-of-sight. An assumption is made that all companies have a mix of weapons, including a few bows, and that UnderEarth is dark.

I readily admit the influence of *Lord of the Rings* on LORDS OF UNDEREARTH. I have been a long-time Tolkien fan, while I'm not particularly interested in swords-and-sorcery.

LORDS OF UNDEREARTH is a good way to introduce FRP gamers to boardgames. It is simple and easy to learn – the basic rules are only nine 4" x 6" pages with lots of diagrams – and games rarely take more than an hour to play. The game design uses familiar systems with a few new twists, rather than groundbreaking game systems, and the background is based on Tolkien and familiar fantasy themes rather than a totally new world. But LORDS OF UNDEREARTH is playable and (I hope) fun, and that's the most important thing.

Errata for LORDS OF UNDEREARTH

1. On the sample unit on page 3, the labels for "Movement Allowance" and "Combat Factor" are switched.

2. Companies and Individuals counters are not clearly distinguished. Note that the Dwarf Dependents and the Goblins are Companies, and that Companies generally have much larger combat factors than Individuals.

3. "North" is towards map section A. The East Gate is the door next to the white (outside) hexes on the right side of Section A. East Hall is the large room with a pit, next to the East Gate. The Great Hall is the large room in the center. West Gate is the door going to the Outside hexes in the southwest corner.

4. The Set-up rules for "Pursuit" (scenario 20.1) should say that a Captain of the Dwarves' Garrison is placed on the "Lord" (abbreviated "L.") hex of the Throne room.

5. In the "UnderEarth Dwellers" section of scenario 20.5 ("Gold!"), the following list should be inserted in rule 2, after "All UnderEarth dwellers except the Dragon": (1 35-8 Goblin Company, 2 Trolls, 1 Wolf, 1 Bear, 1 Gargoyle, and 1 Giant Scorpion).

6. The rules for "Gold!" should state explicitly that players may attack each other, as well as the UnderEarth dwellers.

–Keith Gross

In the March issue of

Gamer's Guide

there were reviews of Nova Game Design's *The Hammer of Thor,* SPI's *Fifth Corps,* and *TimeTripper,* GDW's *The Battle of Lobositz,* TSR's *Boothill,* and Avalon Hill's *Magic Realm.* There was also "Spotlight", an inside view of game publishing companies. This issue looked in on Nova Game Designs, Inc.

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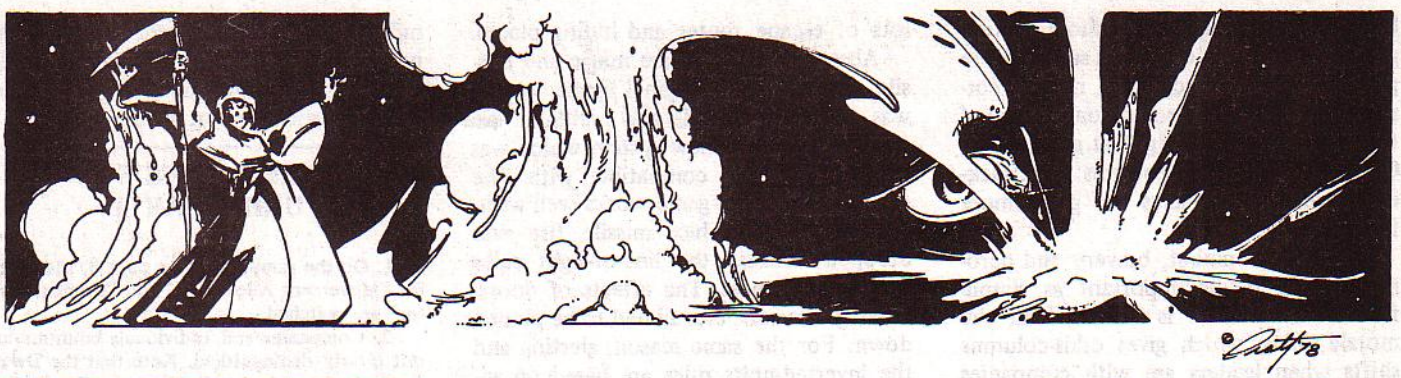


FEATURED REVIEW:

Expert D&D

by Aaron Allston

In the beginning there was *Dungeons and Dragons*™ – Original *Dungeons and Dragons*, later called the Collector's Edition. Then there were *Greyhawk* and *Blackmoor* and *Eldritch Wizardry*, which were essentially *Expanded Original D&D*. Then came *Advanced D&D* (which was advanced *Original D&D*), and *Basic D&D* (which was basic *Original D&D*). And, ultimately, we have *Expert D&D*, which is expert *Basic D&D*, not expert *Original D&D*, or expert *Advanced D&D;* and *Expert Basic D&D* brings it all to the same approximate scope as *Original D&D*. One gets the impression that the TSR crew spends its off-hours designing mazes for rats to become lost in.

In essence, *Expert D&D* is an expansion kit for *Basic D&D*. *Basic* introduces the gamer to FRP gaming and provides for characters and encounters of 1st through 3rd experience levels. *Expert* elaborates on the system and provides for characters to attain up to 14th level. A planned supplement to the series, the *D&D Companion Set*, will allow for characters and encounters of up to 36th level.

The *Basic D&D* series, naturally enough, is incompatible with any other version of *D&D*. This game is rather strange, even for *Dungeons and Dragons*. For example, the character classes available are Fighter, Magic-User, Cleric, Thief, *Dwarf, Elf,* and *Halfling*! The first four are strictly human classes. The dwarf is a fighter, with the racial characteristics you've come to expect. All elves are fighter/magicians. The halfling class is a small-scale fighter with stealth and spying, but not thief, abilities. (Actually, the halfling class rules take the little fellow closer to the Tolkien origins; see Ron Pehr's article in *Different Worlds* 11 for more on the same theme.) Gone are options for pure elf magicians, or dwarf fighter-thieves; gone are the paladins, rangers, bards, illusionists, assassins, monks, and druids. A desire for simplicity undoubtedly brought about their removal, but some of the color is gone from the game. Perhaps the companion set will rectify this.

Alignment has been returned to its original state – no more Lawful/Good, Chaotic/Neutral, Neutral/Evil, and so forth; all we have are Law, Neutrality, and Chaos. Most of the game's systems also return to the original – combat, types of weapons, armor class, equipment lists, etc. Monster and spell descriptions are arranged as per *AD&D*. Some things like the effects of high character attributes (strength, etc.) are unique to this version.

Overall, the Basic series is a good set of rules, but only as a series. A beginning gamer will find *Basic D&D* well-organized and playable, but so limited as to soon grow pale and vapid. With *Expert,* the scope is increased to acceptable levels, with rules for adventuring beyond the dungeon – wilderness, aerial, naval, the world at large – but this doubles the investment required.

Expert D&D is practically valueless outside the series. It duplicates materials in *Original D&D* and *AD&D,* and breaks no new ground. Its use with other RPGs is questionable, except for the section on castlebuilding, which few other games handle in detail. It is, however, well-arranged and invaluable in the context of the series.

I wish I had had the *Basic D&D* series when I began gaming. The rules sets are legible, indexed, punched for 3-hole notebooks, reorganizable, and, best of all, understandable. One actually can learn the game from the rules, something not possible with *Original D&D*.

That is, however, perhaps the most annoying part about this set of rules. With sufficient playtesting, it could have been released seven or eight years ago, instead of the original set. This series is the product of hindsight.

And yet . . . if they're going to release another version of the game incompatible with other versions, why not release one which corrects the long-standing problems with the rules? Combat, for example, is not noticeably different from the way it was in the original rules, and it still bears no similarity to reality of any sort.

Some problems from the original are corrected, though. Provisions for a character's literacy and linguistic ability are included. The coin-weight measurement system has been improved upon. Rules for automatic hits and misses in combat, regardless of level or armor class, are given.

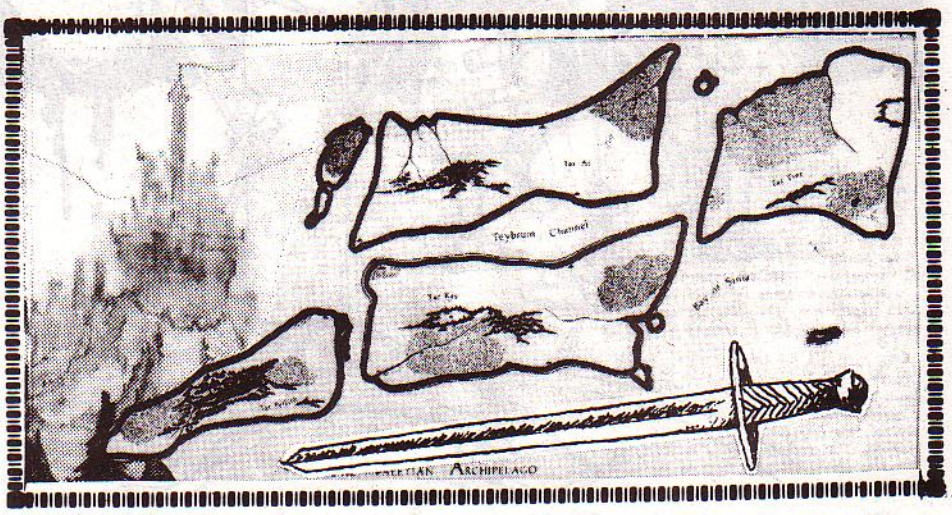
Overall, I must recommend this series so beginning role-playing gamers, perhaps with the incorporation of *Greyhawk, Blackmoor,* and *Eldritch Wizardry* rules from the original series; or perhaps the Companion Set will cover the essentials there. The cost of the rules set is not prohibitive, the components are good (though TSR's art and dice *always* need improvement), and the whole thing is likeable. Experienced FRP gamers, though, will find nothing novel here.

Basic D&D (TSR); $12. Boxed with 64-page rulebook, beginning dungeon module ("Keep on the Borderlands" – reviewed TSG 37), polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20), crayon. New revised edition published 1981.

Expert D&D (TSR); $12. Boxed, with 64-page rulebook, beginning wilderness module ("Isle of Dread" – reviewed this issue), polyhedral dice (as above), crayon. Published 1981.

Who Dares Challenge The World of

LORDS of VALETIA



. . **Do you dare?**. Will you challenge the lofty mountains, the darkling woods, the vast oceans of the world of Valetia?

If you do, you can find great adventure and enjoyment. Not only is this the original pro-postal role-playing campaign, but after 2 years of redesign and semi-computerization, Lords of Valetia comes to you with the best quality entertainment you can afford. This is the campaign you have been waiting for. Not like other postal games, this is no wargame, but a true role-playing campaign in the fine tradition of Dungeons and Dragons or Tunnels and Trolls. With its own unique, realistic systems for combat, magic, and nature, **Lords of Valetia** can allow you to explore virtually any dream you wish to act out in its setting.

If you do join the ranks of LOV players perhaps your adventure will be exciting enough to be written up in Valiance, but even if it is not, you can experience the rich fabric of the continuing story that is Valetia.

Here are just a few of the personalities you may meet or be affected by:

Darathon, High Lord of Valetia. A king of Tar-Ras, the southern isle, he was proclaimed Lord of Valetia after repulsing the invasion of an evil wizard, which resulted in the northern kings demise. He founded the esteemed **Order of Peregrinators** as guerilla fighters, rangers, who eventually could achieve rulership of cities. . .but the high Council and Citylords didn't like this and demanded an end to the Order once the peril had vanished. Now, a weak-seeming Darathon accedes to their request, and grows defensive.

Gyles, son of Merren, the late northern king, and Prince of Tar-At, the north central island of the 4 island Valetian Archipelago. Bitter that Darathon from Tar-Ras was made king in his place, Gyles has roamed the wilderness planning revolution. Now his plans are ripe . . .

Korloth, evil Sorcerer who lead the defeated invasion from the eastern island, and tried to cripple At with snow and sandstorms the year after, while he built a stronghold there. Now he is fled, without sign of the next attack he may make or its direction.

Mizaar, a young Peregrinator, and elf-sage who has yet to find magic, sleeps in Berios in the house of a great wizard with a Dwarf, a brave legion Captain, and an enigmatic man of mysterious powers, awaiting the morning ship. If his companions can keep him from being herded back to Tar-At, and prison, he must decide whether or not to take what might be the greatest quest yet discovered, though it take him to the ends of the earth . . .

Gannalon, hero of the **Dark Time**, who tore down Korloths new stronghold and sent him reeling from At. He met privately with Darathon, but what he learned turned him cold and he stalked out of the Golden City of Vanne, and sailed away to Ras with what plan in mind . . .

Zindas, Minister of Tal, and powerful sage; virtual ruler while the citylord is ill. He was to have searched for the greatest good wizard alive, who disappeared within the last two months, **Airewon**, but Zindas has not yet sent out any searchers, and word gathers that Tal will break from the Empire . . .

Sand, Lordess of Passalassett, and chief of the Elves of Tarpanwood. She declares for freedom, with the Hobbits of the wood and Men of Tal. To her ears have come tales of kidnap and torture of her bretheren, and this may mean the greatest war since the ancient conflicts with the Dwarves.

Ronth, Marshal of the **Golden Paladins** legion of Vanne. He is beset by self-doubt as he follows the command to round up Peregrinators, and even more disturbed by news that Darathon has called in his personal legion from Tar-Ras, to come to Vanne. Will he fight them or stand aside as the foreign army comes to the Palace. Having served his city since Merren was king, a short 3 years ago, Ronth knows his choice is crucial . . .

Augustus Orionus, Marshal of the famed **Facican Guard**, that selfsame personal guard of the arch king Darathon, marches with pleasure to the greatest city in the world, to protect his king and at the same time, perhaps, to win his way to lordship as a favorite of the court . . .

Danmeld, a Dwarf and a seasoned veteran of the constant bitter struggle between his kind and the mountain Rasks and Trolls. He is Captain of two companies of dwarves dispatched from Lufgard by request of Darathon, to march against the insurgents. Does he hold the power of neutrality, or is he ordered to obey regardless of his judgement . . .

Rallus Corvinious, only a Lieutenant, and would-be noble, commanding a rag-tag collection of the **Messenger's Guard**, but his connections and desires have brought him into contact with a secret organization, which may be the answer to dreams of power second only to those of Korloth himself . . .

Diodric, a fine Peregrinator, and rediscoverer of the ancient **Pallethian Arm**, a formidable weapon. Will he return to Tal to fight for his city, or will he succumb to the honors he received from the emperor in Vanne?

Eleanith, second Guardian at floating rock, against the reappearance of Korloth, and Sorceress of Green Robes. An elf maid, strong of will, who guards her land from evil; why would she suddenly flee Meton, and seek out the cold peaks of **Kir-Umbral**, in the common tongue, the Dark Mountains . . .

Kaer, Marshal of the Legions of Meton, a small city strategically halfway from Vanne and the Empire's strongholds, and the cities of Tal and the woodlands where the Elves live, where there has been talk of dissaffection, or supporting Gyles. He controls the middle point of the southern coast. Who will he strike for?

Melador, barbarian general of the east isle, Tar-Tser, who lead the armies of Korloth, and was thought dead, waits in his small shop, where he has hidden disguised for over 2 years. Waiting, watching, he now signals that the time is ripe for yet another leap to power . . .

Corriander, mistress of a dozen adventures, and intimate of the court of Merren, who fled when Darathon took command. She plies the northern coast in search of pirate strongholds. . .to conquer!

. . **Thonn**, Captain of Peregrinators, the first of those still living, to have joined the Order. As senior Peregrinator he has worked with great stealth to unhinge the forces of evil. Now he must choose between his pledge, and his sense of justice . . .

Tomaak, a strong voice in the council of seamen of Tellos, second greatest seaport in Valetia until leveled during the invasion. He seeks from the city of Vanne a monopoly on eastern trade, and the traditional rivalry between Tellosian and Talesi provides the onus for Tomaak to offer his vessels to Darathon. . .as Privateers against Tal.

Xerqon, Master of the Guild of Assasins, sole holder of the rank of **Z'al Kel**, the 12th and most powerful level of the clan. Forced by war to flee to the city of Tal, he is approached with an offer he must ponder. 1000 talents of gold to kill the sage Zindas. . . or if he will undertake to murder Darathon . . .an equally tempting offer, of power undreamed, by a wizard skilled enough to make good.

These are but a few characters, player and non-player, who populate the facinating world of Valetia.

The quarterly magazine VALIANCE contains the latest Valetian "proclamations", dramatizations of encounters by the most resourceful players, rule modifications, and a continuing history of the world of Valetia.

A 12-turn subscription to LORDS OF VALETIA is $25.00. The rulebook, a subscription to VALIANCE, for as long as you remain a player, and all starting materials (maps, supplements, etc...except for return postage) are absolutely free to players. If dissatisfied with the initial materials, new subscribers must return the Rulebook and will then receive a full refund.

Lords of Valetia is an adult game open to anyone 18 years of age or older living within the continental U.S. Residents of Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, or those having APO FPO addresses will only be accepted on provision that the customer realize there may be excessive postal delays to those areas at times. All funds must be paid in U.S. currency.

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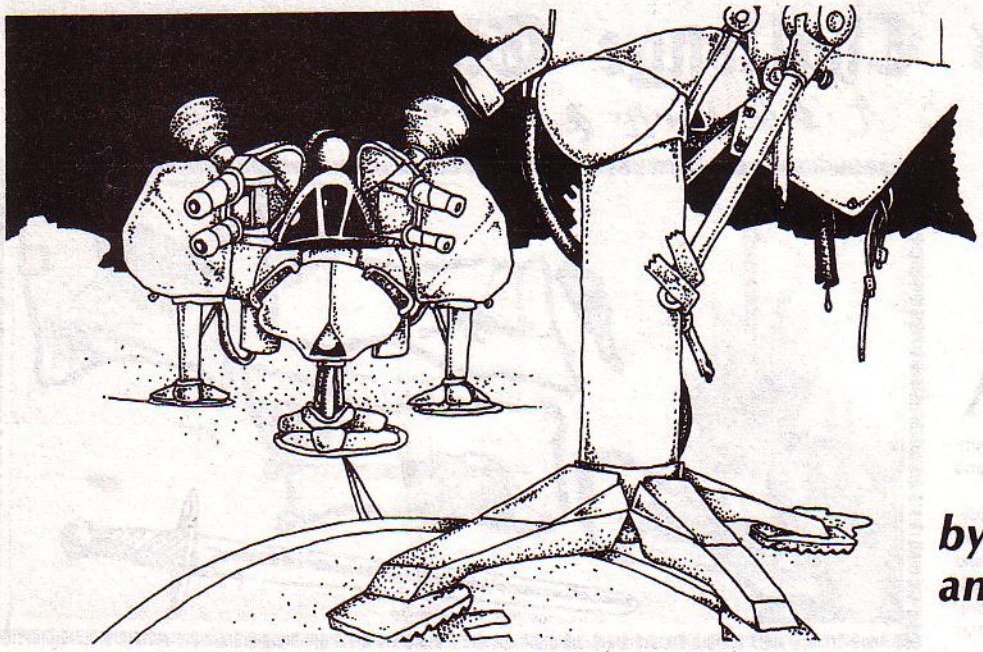

YA WANNA BUY A USED SHIP?

by Tim Brown and William A. Barton

Since construction times for ships in *Traveller* are so incredibly long, many players have been unable to purchase new ships. Therefore, I have developed a system for generating used ships for sale. Using this system, players may effectively ignore construction times (the ships have already been built) and may even obtain a ship for a cheaper price than normal, although there may turn out to be a few problems with a used craft.

Ships may be found for sale only at Type A starports, since this is where most potential buyers would congregate in search of vessels. Once players have arrived at such a starport, the referee should make one die roll with a six-sided die on Table I, cross indexing the result with the population of the world on which the starport is located.

Table I

Roll	Population									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3
2	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
3	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
4	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
5	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1

This will provide the number of individual ships for sale at that starport. As the number of ships for sale may change over a period of time, players may elect to remain at the starport in hopes that more suitable vessels may be offered for sale as they wait. However, a maximum of one roll on Table I per week is allowed.

For each individual ship up for sale, the referee must generate various information, such as ship type, its cost and the condition of the ship. The type of ship available is easily determined by rolling one six-sided die on Table II.

Table II, Ship Type

Roll	Ship Type
1	Scout
2	Free Trader
3	Free Trader
4	Free Trader
5	Subsidized Merchant
6	Other (Roll on Table III)

Scout: As newer ships are constructed for the scout service, older vessels are often phased out and sold to the general public. Though usually around 40 years old, these ships are, on the whole, in good condition and have had annual maintenance since construction. Used scout ships no longer have an air/raft when offered up for sale by the service, but retain double turrets – void of weaponry. They are, in all other aspects, identical to those described in *Traveller* Book 2.

Free Trader: The fact that a free trader is for sale indicates that its owner was an unsuccessful merchant who has been forced out of business. The ship has been repossessed by the bank and placed on the market in an attempt to recover the bank's investment. Since the former owner was undoubtedly in financial difficulties during the final months of ownership, and the bank has probably not bothered to do so, the ship will not have undergone annual maintenance in some time. The first course a new owner should take is to initiate a complete overhaul of the drive systems and the electronic circuitry. This will require an expenditure of CR 500,000 and a one-week stay at a Type A or B starport. Should the new owner elect to forego the overhaul, the referee should secretly roll twice on Table V in addition to the initial roll (see below), adding a die modifier of -4. Two out of six free traders offered for sale will have one double turret, but no weaponry will be installed. Otherwise, the ship is as outlined in Book 2.

Subsidized Merchants: There are two types of subsidized merchant vessels commonly found in a *Traveller* universe. Most are Type R; one in six, however, will be a Type M (see Book 2 for stats). Subsidized merchants of either type are usually sold by the government should their captains fail to complete their agreed-upon duties before receiving full title. The givernment has repossessed the vessel and offered it for sale at the nearest starport. The ship has undergone annual maintenance at government expense, but still may be subject to faults. Players buying such a ship from the government have no obligation to cover its previously assigned route and are free to roam the galaxy.

Other: Ships in this class may be of custom design, created on demand by the referee. General features such as engineering design, hull type, fuel requirements and base price of these ships are all that the ref need generate, unless the ship is actually purchased. In such a case, he might want to design the ship in greater detail. Or, if the referee prefers, he may use Table III.

Table III, Ship Type

Roll	Ship Type
1	Custom Design
2	Corsair
3	Seeker
4	Lab Ship
5	Safari Ship
6	Cruiser (1-2)/Yacht (3-6)

Corsair: A captured pirate ship, put up for sale by the authorities. As outlined

in *Citizens of the Imperium,* but minus weaponry and variable identification features (which can be restored by new owner, if he desires, at any shipyard on a law level 0 planet, for one-quarter the ship's base price).

Seeker: Seekers on sale will usually retain their mining laser (four in six chance), but will probably be old and battered due to their use in asteroid mining and the fact that no belter would sell his ship unless it was defective or he was unsuccessful at his trade (in which case it is doubtful he'd have kept up its annual maintenance). Roll twice on Table V for any Seeker for sale, and two more times if new buyer fails to overhaul it, as with a free trader.

Lab Ship: As outlined in *Citizen,* minus air/raft and ATV. Offered for sale by a scientific foundation unable to obtain enough research grants to keep the vessel. Usually in good shape. No laboratory equipment will remain aboard, however.

Safari Ship: As outlined in *Citizens,* minus air/raft. Only two in six will retain caging areas and trophy room (always void of trophies in any case). As safari ships on sale usually belong to failed hunters or spoiled nobles who have tired of them, they probably won't have undergone annual maintenance for some time, and will need overhaul as with a free trader. Note: The safari ship as outlined in the book has no jump drive. Players purchasing such a ship will find it necessary to install one after purchase. It is possible, however, that some (one in six) may have had a jump drive added by the previous owner.

It is also possible that a Type C cruiser or a Type Y yacht may be up for sale, though these will be less common due to the quasi-military nature of the first and the penchant nobles have for keeping the second in their own ranks. These are exactly as outlined in Book 2 except that all weaponry and auxiliary vehicles have been removed.

The price for which the owner will sell his ship is calculated by rolling two six-sided dice and checking the result against Table IV. The result will be the percentage of the base price of the ship in question (when built at a starport) which the owner will accept as payment.

Table IV

Roll	Percentage of Base Price
0	50%
1	55%
2	60%
3	65%
4	70%
5	75%

6	80%
7	85%
8	90%
9	95%
10	100%
11	105%
12	110%

(If, after all modifiers, the result is less than zero, treat it as zero.)

Certain skills may be used as a -DM when rolling on the Price Table, at the referee's discretion. Administration skill may be used to represent the player's skill in "talking the seller down" in price. Bribery skill could be useful if the ship is being sold through an agent; the owner himself would never lower the price for a mere bribe. Skills such as Streetwise, or a Social Standing of 11+, could perhaps be used to intimidate or impress the owner or agent into lowering his price but probably no greater than one for every two levels of skill and certainly no more than two tops – again, at the referee's discretion. (Excessive use of intimidation may bring in the starport police...)

Each used ship has a chance of having one or more defects when purchased. The referee must secretly roll for each ship once on Table V before purchase to determine whether or not it is faulty (twice for the seekers, above).

Table V

Roll	Result
2	Power plant malfunctions
3	Maneuver Drives malfunction
4	Misjumps one out of six times
5	Periodically loses cabin pressure
6	No defect
7	No defect
8	No defect
9	No defect
10	No defect
11	No defect
12	Turrets jam

If a player with Engineering-2 or better inspects the ship before he buys, these faults will be identified before any money actually changes hands. The party may then decide whether or not they wish to buy a faulty vessel. If so, the owner will offer a 20% reduction in price. Otherwise he will have to repair the ship to the party's satisfaction. If this inspection is not made, any defects in the ship will surface in one to six weeks (roll one die) after purchase. The referee may wish to place actual breakdowns at critical times during the ship's operation to make such crises more interesting.

Players may also want to sell their own vessels to obtain additional credits. Note that a scout ship received as a mustering-out benefit may never be sold or disposed of in any manner while the player to whom it was awarded is alive. This applies to lab ships as well, should they be used. Any other ship is eligible to be sold. The referee should decide at random how many potential buyers will examine any given ship for sale, and then determine how many actually have the money for such an expenditure.

This system of pre-owned starship purchasing should smooth out the flow of any *Traveller* game in which players are looking for their own means of transportation, yet find themselves short on time and credits. It may even encourage more people to visit your universe!

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Combination Game Contest

The contest in TSG 35 involved the creation of peculiar combinations of games. Responses were less numerous than in some of the other contests – but what they lacked in numbers they made up in ingenuity.

First place (a 12-issue subscription) goes to Theodore Miller (Howard Beach, NY) for:

The Creature that Ate Lunch

This variant combines *The Creature that Ate Sheboygan* with *Food Fight* (from *Dragon* 44). *Food Fight* is set up normally, but on the 2nd round a monster enters (roll on Monster Origin Table).

Monster Origin Table

1. Fictional creature come to life – enters from library.
2. Evolved from leftover meat loaf – enters from kitchen.
3. Berserk robot built by shop class – enters from shop.
4. Evolved from dirty sweatsocks – enters from gym.
5. Evolved from greasy rags – enters from janitor's vault.
6. Created by science class demonstration – enters from lab.

The monster is a normal one from *Creature,* although reduced in size, with the following rules additions/modifications:

Turn sequence. The monster movement phase and combat phase are added to the *Food Fight* sequence just before students' turns, starting on the 2nd round. Game length is 10 rounds.

Movement. The monster may move diagonally. It may not enter a square with a table, garbage can, or human, or move through a wall. It may slip on food, but appearance damage has no effect, and stun becomes lose one point from strength.

Destruction. The monster may use its destruction value on inanimate objects in adjacent squares. It may destroy interior walls which border its square, including the walls of the garbage counter area, principal's office, and faculty/staff lounge. Defense strengths are 4 for a table, 2 for a garbage can or wall (1 square side); and 1 for a tray, pumper or bowl.

Effects of destruction. A table becomes clear spaces, and any trays and food on it are placed at random in these squares. A garbage can is removed from play, and its garbage spilled normally. A tray, pumper, or bowl is removed from play; if it contained food the monster eats it (1 movement point per item).

A destroyed wall becomes clear square side. When appropriate walls are destroyed, the garbage area has fullness rolled for each square; the principal's office has the principal, an immobile F/S, placed there; and the F/S lounge has a random F/S placed there.

Attacks. The monster may attack any humans in adjacent squares, dividing its attack value between them. If the attack value vs. the human's speed on the *Creature* CRT indicates damage for the defender the human is stunned for that many turns; damage for the monster and retreats have no effect.

Monster hunger. When the monster starts in or enters a square containing or adjacent to food (including garbage counters or stunned humans), a die is rolled. On a roll of 1 or 2 it stops to eat all such food, in whatever order it chooses, at 1 MP for a food item or garbage counter and 2 for a human. If its remaining move is insufficient it eats as much as possible, and rolls again on its next turn. Any food sticking to the monster is eaten before rolling, at the same MP cost. If the monster is adjacent to a table, roll for the number of items on it.

The monster may enter the line area but moves along it one space at a time, and only eats food line items when in the space thay are served to.

Special abilities. These have normal effects except as follows:

Fire breathing – may not be used.

Lightning – tables and walls block line of sight.

Web spinning – a student may enter a web, but must spend the next 2 turns cutting out. Webbed food may not be taken by students. Webbed students may be eaten.

Fear immobilization – immobilized humans must be stunned to be eaten.

Mind Control – a controlled F/S has characteristics rolled like a student, and may take and throw food. A controlled principal is still immobile, but may release students.

Students. Students follow normal *Food Fight* rules, except as follows: Students may attack monsters, but appearance damage has no effect, except that the food sticks to the monster. Physical damage doesn't stun, but these items have an attack strength; stun 4-6 becomes strength 5, stun 5-6 becomes 3, and stun 6 becomes 2. Monster damage and retreats are normal, attackers are unaffected.

Students may enter the food line through destroyed walls, taking food from that point on, and may leave through destroyed walls, taking food to that point. If the principal has been eaten, apprehended students may leave the office once the apprehending F/S has left.

Faculty/Staff. F/S treats monsters and controlled F/S as students, once they have taken food or attacked someone. If apprehended the monster can immediately use all or part of its attack strength on the F/S. If successful it then takes its turn with any remaining strength; if unsuccessful it is taken to the principal's office, and starts its turn there.

Victory conditions. Students have normal *Food Fight* conditions, but must avoid being eaten as well as apprehended.

The monster receives victory points as follows:

10/human eaten
1/food item or garbage counter eaten
5/table destroyed
3/garbage can destroyed

It is trying for twice its initial point total.

Variants. Balance may be adjusted by changing the monster's probability or movement cost to eat, or altering its characteristcs. Students may be assigned special abilities; e.g., Lenny the Loser may not be recognized as food by the monster, science students may discover a weakness, etc.

Second place (a 6-issue subscription) goes to Lawrence Person (Houston, TX) for the even stranger (but less playable) TIME WARP WAR. Of all the entries we got, this one used the largest number of games.

Time Warp War

The situation: A sudden time warp has appeared on a Northern European battlefield in the year 2090. It carries an Ogre Mark V back to Gettysburg battlefield on the third day of the battle. The Council of 14¼ decides this could change the

course of history if uncorrected and sends Gandalf the Grey (drawn up AD&D style) and Dr. Who (drawn up *Traveller* style) to stop it.

The object. The Ogre player tries to change the course of history. The Council player tries to prevent this.

The map. The AH Gettysburg map (or for complexity freaks, SPI's TSS map).

The counters. One Ogre Mark V counter, all the regular *Gettysburg* or *TSS* counters, a wizard miniature, and a *Dr. Who Lives* button.

The rules. The Ogre has its movement increased 10 fold and destroys everything it goes near in a five hex radius, except for Gandalf and Dr. Who. The Ogre moves according to a random d6 roll. Gandalf and Dr. Who come in on the third turn and try to stop it. Combat rules? Why, *Squad Leader,* of course! Any destruction spell attacks on the Ogre are resolved on the AFV kill table. A spell has a "caliber" equal to its spell level times 20. Dr. Who may use his superior mental ability to psionically attack the Ogre's cybernetic brain. This is resolved on the AD&D psionic table with the Ogre being treated as Asmodeus. Once the Ogre reaches 0 psionic points is starts singing "*My Little Daisy*" and wanders off the board. After turn 5 all non-Ogre units must make a radiation survival check on the *Gamma World* radiation chart, the turn number being the strength of the attack.

If both Gandalf and Dr. Who are destroyed the Council player gets one last chance to stop the Ogre by sending in Tarzan on a death mission to destroy the computer brain. Tarzan is represented by a *Kung Fu 2100* counter. He faces 5 security robots from *Traveller* on an *Annihilator* map using *Melee* rules. Good luck trying to figure that one out.

Once the Ogre is destroyed the battle is fought out normally with the Ogre player taking the confederate side and the Council player taking the Union side and a Bufferin.

Victory conditions: Ogre survives past turn 10: Total Ogre victory.

Ogre destroyed but Confederate Victory: Marginal Ogre victory.

Ogre, Gandalf, Dr. Who, and Tarzan all destroyed, Union victory: Tie.

Union victory with at least one Council champion surviving: Marginal Council victory.

Ogre destroyed, all Council champions survive, Union Victory: Complete Council victory.

If the players were smart enough to not even try to play the game they both win a Moral victory. If both players go insane the game is considered a tie.

CONTEST

This month's contest is a puzzle supplied by Phil Rennert (Houston, TX). It's based on *Ogre/GEV.* As far as we can tell, there's only one correct answer. Prizes will be awarded as follows: For the first correct answer from within Texas, a 6-issue TSG sub. For the first correct answer from the rest of the U.S., another 6-issue sub. And for the first correct answer from outside the U.S., a third 6-issue sub. This should help make up for the vagaries of the Postal Service. If anyone comes up with a *better* answer than Rennert, we'll give the first one to do so 6 issues as well. The answer and the winners' names will be given in TSG 41. All entries become the property of TSG. Please note: WE can't write all wrong answerers back to explain where they went wrong – so please don't ask. Wait for the answer.

Puzzle

The game is *Ogre/G.E.V.*; you are the commander of a Paneuropean battalion heavily engaged with Combine forces in the fighting following the collapse of the 47th cease-fire. At the moment, you are 1 point behind, and your main command post is threatened. Furthermore, the 48th cease-fire has been agreed to, and is about to take effect; there is only one complete turn left in the game.

Fortunately, there is a way you can snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, and in fact, you can do it no matter how bad your luck is and how good your opponent's is. It's your move; your troops await your orders.

The forces involved are those shown below; no other units are in the vicinity. Your Ogre Mk. V has fired two missiles but is otherwise completely brand new; the enemy Ogre Mk. III is badly battered, with only one secondary, five AP guns, and two treads remaining. The victory point rules from *G.E.V.* apply, but you don't get the 100 points for his Ogre unless you TOTAL it (all weapons and treads destroyed). You are now 1 point behind; the 68 points of damage done to his Ogre and the 2 points (missiles fired) done to yours are included in that number. Your command post is movement 0, defense 3, and is worth 25 victory points.

In any conflict between *G.E.V.* and *Ogre* rules, use *G.E.V.* rules; in particular, the *G.E.V.* overrun combat rules are used (but ramming of or by Ogres is allowed, at the end of the first overrun fire round; resolve as in *Ogre*). No optional rules are in effect, and cities, roads, and bridges cannot be destroyed.

To reiterate: you get a turn, then your opponent gets a turn, then the cease-fire inspectors arrive and ALL shooting stops (you don't even get to finish off crippled Ogres). Your strategy must win the game regardless of what your opponent does, even though all your die rolls give the worst possible result, and all your opponent's give the best possible result (for him).

Indicate the moves of your units below, shooting each hex moved through, overrun attacks if any, and targets and odds in the overrun combat, targets in the fire phase and odds, and (for G.E.V.s) second phase movement and overruns.

Using the G.E.V. board, set up the following units in the hexes given:

Paneuropean forces	*Combine forces*
0514 – HVY TANK	0712 – 1 INF
0513 – Ogre Mk. V	1813 – 1 INF
0512 – G.E.V.	1914 – 1 INF
1117 – 1 INF	1015 – HVY TANK
1016 – G.E.V.	1014 – LT TANK
0711 – 1 INF	1013 – 1 INF
0811 – 3 INF	1113 MSL TANK
0709 – G.E.V.	1212 – Ogre Mk. III
0911 – 1 INF	and 2 INF
1412 – CP ALPHA	

On a copy of the answer sheet below, show movement, overruns, fire, and second movement/overruns (if any) that you would command for each unit.

UNIT	MOVEMENT		FIRE		2ND MOVEMENT	
	Move	Overruns	Target	Odds	Move	Overruns
HVY (0514)						
1 INF (1117)						
1 INF (0711)						
1 INF (0911)						
3 INF (0811)						
G.E.V. (0512)						
G.E.V. (1016)						
G.E.V. (0709)						
Ogre (0513)						

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Deus Ex Machina

Fragment 2

by Joseph Power

One of the first routines a gamer with a computer will want to write is a dice rolling routine. This is normally coded in the following manner:

```
8000 PRINT "HOW MANY DICE ";
8010 INPUT N
8020 PRINT "HOW MANY SIDES ";
8030 INPUT S
8040 R = 0
8050 FOR I = 1 TO N
8060  R = R + 1 + INT( RND(1) * S)
8070 NEXT I
8080 PRINT "RESULT IS "; R
8090 GOTO 8000
```

There are several advantages to this initial method. It is easy to code, easy to understand, and it seems to be the way people actually roll dice. It has, however, three disadvantages. The input format is awkward, the time it takes to compute the routine depends on the number of dice rolled, and there is no protection from user error.

"Fragment 2" is a different version of a dice rolling routine. It is longer and more complicated than the first version but it overcomes all three shortcomings. A closer look at what was used to correct these problems will prove beneficial to the novice.

Parsing. Instead of having a separate input for the number of dice and the number of sides, the new version takes requests of the form **NdS[op M]** where **N** is the number of dice, **S** is the number of sides on a die, **op** is + - * or /, and **M** is a modifier. All numbers must be integers and anything in [ ] may be omitted. The act of dividing this request into the various parts of information is called parsing the input. Another example of parsing you're probably familiar with is diagraming sentences. Lines 8090 through 8290 chop R$ into **N, S, OP,** and **M.** The subroutine 8500-8560 turns a string of numeric characters into a number.

The Bell Curve. By employing an equation that returns a value between 0 and 1 with the same probability as the dice would have returning a specific result between the minimum and maximum rolls, the number of random numbers generated can be kept constant. The result can then be scaled up into the range of possible dice rolls. Lines 8340-8350 compute the dice roll. Line 8360 then applies the modifier if there is one.

Idiot Proofing. No, I'm not calling you an idiot! Most programmers use this term instead of "error detection and correction." When you make a program idiot proof you add code to either prevent or correct invalid inputs.

If you were to use this fragment in a larger program you want to be sure that it doesn't blow up, forcing you to rerun the program. Idiot proofing is intermixed throughout the fragment. I used correction instead of prevention because I wanted to allow the user to just hit return to get 1d6. Thus, if you type d10 the roll will be 1d10 while 3d returns 3d6. The default for modifiers is to have none.

After the roll has been computed you are shown what the computer thinks you wanted. An input of d222+7 would get back an answer of the form:

FOR 1 d 222 + 7 RESULT IS 127

One of the most common mistakes made by computer novices is to see a program in a magazine and to enter it in at once. These are the same people who wonder why programming is so hard and why every program written in Basic won't run unmodified. (Experienced people are amazed that ANY Basic programs can run unmodified.) Study programs before spending hours at the keyboard – you'll have lots more time to run them afterward.

Any comments or questions can be sent with a SASE to:

Joseph R. Power
124 Cedar St. No. 5
E. Lansing, MI 48823

Fragment 2

```
8000 PRINT "ROLL ";
8010 INPUT R$
8020 P = 1
8030 N = 0
8040 S = 0
8050 OP = 0
8060 M = 0
8070 LR = LEN(R$)
8080 IF LR = 0 THEN 8300
8090 GOSUB 8500
8100 N = Q
8110 IF P =>LR THEN 8300
8120 P = P + 1
8130 GOSUB 8500
8140 S = Q
8150 IF P>LR THEN 8300
8160 OP = 1
8170 IF Q$ = "+" THEN 8250
8180 OP = 2
8190 IF Q$ = "-" then 8250
8200 OP = 3
8210 IF Q$ = "*" THEN 8250
8220 OP = 4
8230 IF Q$ = "/" THEN 8250
8240 OP = 0
8250 IF OP = 0 THEN 8300
8260 P = P + 1
8270 IF P>LR THEN 8240
8280 GOSUB 8500
8290 M = Q
8295 IF M>0 THEN 8300
8297 OP = 0
8300 IF N>0 THEN 8320
8310 N = 1
8320 IF S>0 THEN 8340
8330 S = 6
8340 R = INT(.5 + N * (S - 1) * .5^ RND(1))+N
8350 IF RND(1)<.5 THEN R = N * (S + 1) - R
8360 ON OP GOSUB 8420, 8440, 8460, 8480
8370 PRINT "FOR "; N; " d "; S;
8380 IF OP = 0 THEN 8400
8390 PRINT MID$("+-*/",OP,1); M;
8400 PRINT " THE RESULT IS "; R
8410 GOTO 8000
8420 R = R + M
8430 RETURN
8440 R = R - M
8450 RETURN
8460 R = R * M
8470 RETURN
8480 R = R / M
8490 RETURN
8500 Q = 0
8510 Q$ = MID$(R$,P,1)
8520 IF VAL(Q$)<>ASC(Q$) - 48 THEN 8560
8530 Q = Q * 10 + VAL (Q$)
8540 P = P + 1
8550 IF P<= LR THEN 8510
8560 RETURN
```

GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice

Part XII: Components

by Nick Schuessler and Steve Jackson

A vital part of game design – especially if you want to have your game published – is proper design of the "physical systems" or game components. Component design begins the moment you start to invent a game; you'll have to keep it in mind constantly. If you write and playtest rules that involve an impossible component, you've painted yourself into a corner.

The important constraints on component design are:

Game format. If you're designing for a major publisher, there will be certain parameters you have to follow – tight or loose, depending on the publisher and the type of game. A sample format might be "112 half-inch counters, 11" x 17" mapsheet, 8-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, and one letter-sized page for charts and tables." This is a very restrictive format – you might have more options to choose from. But a restricitve format is not always a bad thing; when you start with many of your format decisions made, you can immediately get down to the problem of designing the game.

Budget. If you're working to a specific format already, your budget has been pre-planned. If you don't have a format in mind, you'll have to develop one . . . a compromise between your "ideal" game and the money available for printing. Don't design a game that has to have a thousand full-color counters if your total budget for the job is $450. The best sequence here: (1) rough out the design; (2) list the components it would take to achieve it; (3) find out what those components would cost to produce; (4) if you're over budget, start trimming.

Convenience. Whatever you do, you must design your components to make play easier. This is why playtesting with actual component mock-ups is so important. Some interesting designs have been badly flawed by fairly trivial component problems: *Knights and Knaves,* with its incomplete tables, monochrome counters that need to be colored before you start play; *Godsfire,* with a dozen "planet sheets," each covered with cardboard chits, that must be protected from breezes or careless elbows; *Zargo's Lords,* with hexagonal counters that obscure the whole hex . . . you can add to the list as you like.

Assembly. Remember that eventually you'll have to get all of your components into a box, bag, or envelope. Make sure they fit. This may seem like a trivial piece of advice – but don't forget it.

Salability. If you're designing for the market, your final package must (a) be something that can be produced at a profit – which means absolutely no more than 1/5 of the final selling price can be spent on printing; (b) *look* like it's worth the final selling price. A pretty $20 game with lots of useful components will sell more than a sad-looking $5 game with a few shoddy sheets of paper; (c) be something the market *wants* – which is beyond the scope of this section.

Accuracy. You don't want missing names on the maps, misprints on the counters, errors on the charts and tables. You most especially don't want mistaken figures and examples – these are things that drive the customer mad. Which means *playtest.*

Component Playtesting

It's just as important to test the components as it is it test your rules. Component playtesting goes through two stages:

Design test. Make up fairly close mock-ups of your maps, counters, etc. – but *especially* the charts and tables – as you think they will be in the final version. Then use them in play. See what works, and what may be misleading or inconvenient. If anything is *too* inconvenient, change it and start over.

Proofreading test. Very few game companies go through this stage – it's troublesome in the extreme, and slows their schedules – which is why so many games are so full of mistakes. To try it, proceed as follows: *after* all your maps, counters, charts, rulebook, etc. are laid out in their final form, make copies of them – just as they'll be in the finished version – and *playtest.* Don't just proofread – PLAY. You're trying to eliminate small typographical errors – but you'll find errors, *playing,* that you won't turn up in any number of "cold" readings of the rules.

It's hard to sit on an apparently complete set of paste-ups for a week instead of taking them to the printer. But it's better than printing an errata sheet two weeks after the game comes out.

Get to Know Your Printer

In general, the more you know about printing, the more you'll get for your money when you start producing components. Talk to your local printers; find out which ones are cooperative. A printer who understands what you are trying to do can often make valuable suggestions. A printer who has no idea what you're doing can destroy you totally.

Rules

The first component you'll deal with is the rulebook. This is also the easiest – just a little booklet. If your game is boxed, the booklet can have a plain cover. If it's to be sold in a bag, you'll want to give the rulebook the prettiest cover you can manage.

If your rules are very short, you may be able to fit them onto a single sheet of paper. One warning: sheets larger than about one legal-sized page are hard for the readers to manage. A couple of my own first game releases had single rulesheets more than twice that size, and many people had trouble manipulating them. It seems to be easier just flip through the pages of a standard rulebook, and that's probably the way I'll do it from now on.

In general, the rulebook should be as neat as possible. It should be indexed if the rules are more than about 500 words long; a non-indexed rulebook is a crime

against the gamer, with heinousness increasing as the square of the number of pages. You should number the rules sections, or the pages – preferably both. Use dark-colored ink (preferably black) on light-colored paper. Fancy ink colors are expensive and hard to read.

Maps

The amount of information that can be presented on a map is, in large part, a function of your budget. A multi-color map not only looks much better – it can offer more data, and in clearer form. But those of you who are limited to one color shouldn't despair. It's with a single-color map that your graphic talent (or lack of it) will show most clearly.

The most important point in designing a game map is to make it *clear.* Names and symbols absolutely must be readable; they must be large enough to see; and they must stand out from their background. Terrain symbols must be unambiguous; boundaries must be clearly shown. Show different sorts of areas by color, shading, etc. If you are using different symbols that will be unfamiliar to your readers, make them very legible, and provide a key – preferably on the map itself, so any colors on the map can also be shown on the key. A scroungy-looking map is the first deadly sign of a quick-and-dirty game production.

Next: make it *attractive.* Even the most serious fan would rather play on a good-looking board than an ugly one. If you have no sense of design, find a friend who does. It is *always* possible to blend symbols, colors, type styles, and the rest of the map information into a coherent whole that advances the "feel" of the game. Do it! Too many low-priced games (for that matter, too many expensive ones) suffer from ugly maps because the designer (or publisher) couldn't be troubled to produce attractive ones. (While you're at it, resist the temptation to print with orange ink on lavender paper.)

If you want to decorate the map with marginal illustrations, calligraphy, et cetera – go right ahead. Look at Chaosium's boxed games for some beautiful map examples.

Finally, make your map *helpful.* This will come in playtesting, and is another sign of finished design as opposed to quick-and-dirty. Watch for additional bits of special information that don't *have* to be on the map – but help play. Add set-up and reinforcement information; whatever the design requires. Often you will be repeating information given in the rulebook. That's all right. A certain amount of redundancy makes a game easier to understand and play. And information right there on the map is better than data you have to pull from the book.

Depending on your budget, you may be able to backprint the map. If you do, be careful what you put on the back. NEVER put the game rules on the back. Optional-scenario rules, *maybe.* (I did that in *Raid on Iran,* rather than leave the scenario out, but I'll change it in the second edition.) Good things to put on the back of the map are advertising; historical information; hints for strategy; or even just artwork. As a rule, put things on the back of the map if and only if they will be of interest to the gamers before or after play, but not especially *during* play.

Mounted maps are a feature of some of the more expensive games. This is purely a sales decision. A mounted map is a bit more convenient, and usually more attractive – but it doesn't affect the actual design much. The stability of a mounted board makes "geomorph" maps – multi-section maps that can be assembled in different ways – slightly more feasible.

Charts and Tables

Some material absolutely has to be presented in tabular form – combat results tables, for instance, or weapon effects. Other rules information leaves you more of a choice. Terrain effects, for instance, may be tabular, or may be presented in the text. Before you put material in a table, *think.* Too many charts and tables can befuddle the player (especially the first time he picks it up). Some material is better placed in textual form – or even directly on the maps or counters.

The best way to handle charts and tables is on a separate sheet (or sheets) of paper. You may even want to provide two copies of any especially important tables.

Second-best is to place a table on the map. This may actually be best in some cases. If you have a two-player game and can fit a copy of the CRT on *each end* of the map, fine. But a chart placed on the map in such a way that only one player can read it . . . that's a nuisance.

Just as bad is a chart placed in the rulebook. Eventually, one player will need to consult the rules while another player looks at the chart. Inconvenient.

Absolute dead worst is a chart placed on the back side of the map. Don't laugh. I've seen it done. But don't *you* do it.

Graphic design of charts and tables is a neglected art. SPI uses color-bars to make it easier to read across their tables – not a bad trick. Even more helpful is the use of art. If you table concerns units, put unit silhouettes on it (e.g., *Kung Fu 2100*) to make it easier to use. If you're tabulating terrain effects, show the terrain symbols. Use your imagination.

Proofread your tables over and over again.

If you've got a high budget, you can print charts and tables on cardstock, to make them last longer. Role-playing games often use "referee shields" – large folded pieces of cardstock, with various useful tables on one or both sides, to hide the GM's map from the players'.

Record Sheets

In many games, a single counter is used on the board to represent a unit with many different attributes. These attributes are noted on a "record sheet." A simple record sheet (i.e., for *Ogre*) can be drawn up by hand before play. If your record sheet is a complex one (i.e., for *DragonQuest*), playtest it extensively. You must include space for all necessary data; headings must be clear and easy to find, and spaces must be large enough to write in. On a record sheet, pretty pictures are less important that total clarity. I recommend including one or two copies of a complex record sheet, and letting players photocopy their own (see Play Aids, below). Alternatively, you can make a record sheet permanent by printing it on plastic or laminating it, so players can mark it with grease pencil and erase it. Very nice, but costly. *Star Fleet Battles* uses an ingenious acetate folder to hold record sheets.

Some games include permanent record sheets on which cardboard chits can be moved around to indicate changes in status. The theory is all right, but can give problems in practice. Such a sheet is hard to move and cannot be stacked. The more (and bigger) your record sheets are, the less workable they become.

Counters

Design and production of game counters is often a stumbling block. Counters are *small* . . . and expensive. Counter design depends largely on your budget – so we'll deal with production options first.

The cheapest way to do counters is to print them on ordinary paper. The customer must glue them to cardboard and then cut them out. This is fine in theory;

in practice, a pasted-down counter has a tendency to peel off. This option is therefore acceptable only in an amateur production; it would be scoffed at in a "professional" effort.

Any professional design, then, will have counters printed on cardstock. As a rule, heavier is better. However, cardstock with a "natural" cardboard back should be avoided. It is inexpensive, but has a tendency to split apart in layers. It also cannot be backprinted.

Die-cutting is a "status symbol" in game production. Personally I don't like it; it's expensive, often inaccurate, and produces counters with fuzzy corners that interfere with stacking. But some customers prefer it, and game reviewers are impressed by it.

My preferred alternative is to supply the customer with a totally uncut piece of cardboard – let them cut it out themselves. This is cheap, eliminates the problem of inaccurate cutting, and gives more leeway in counter design. But it's *not* as conveneint for the buyer. Right or wrong, die-cutting is a mark of the "expensive" game. If you decide to go with die-cutting, either supervise it yourself, or get a guarantee from your printer. Quality varies greatly, and a bad job of die-cutting will make the counters both ugly and unusable.

A compromise occasionally seen is strip-cutting – that is, cutting the counters in one direction only. This is cheaper than die-cutting. but no more accurate. It avoids "fuzzy corners," but the buyer still has to use his scissors. I don't recommend it.

The next budget question is *color*. Talk to your printer. Sometimes two colors are almost as cheap as one, or four as cheap as three. Find out what his press can do. The more colorful the counters, the better. Color-it-yourself counters are only for the amateur publication.

Should you back-print the counters? Some game systems simply will not work unless the counters are printed on two sides. In other situations back-printing can halve the number of counters needed. But it's expensive. Each counter sheet must run through the press twice. Furthermore, the back of each counter must be aligned perfectly with its front – and any die-cutting must be aligned with both front and back. This increases waste and therefore cost. Don't do it unless you really need to.

If your budget allows you to do everything with the counters that the game design calls for, you can start to work on the individual counter designs. Otherwise, you need to change your ideas about the game, or find more money.

Number of counters. This must fit within two parameters: the game requirements and the requirements of the format. If your format doesn't allow you all the counters you need, re-design or change formats. If you have room to add extra counters, be careful. Adding extra unit counters without playtesting the new counter mix can ruin your game balance.

Artwork. Each counter will contain pictures, words, letters, numbers . . . something to show what it represents. A typical wargame counter has a central picture (usually a silhouette); numbers giving its abilities; and a name or number for identification. Study your game library for ideas. The objective is to give maximum information with maximum legibility – and make it attractive, too. You should use the largest type you can (which means few numbers and short words). Pictoral symbols should be easily distinguishable from each other. Don't carry the graphics all the way to the edge of the counter; leave a margin for cutting. *This is especially vital if the counters are to be die-cut. Talk about tolerances with your printer.* Uncut counters can use more of their space; scissors are more accurate than die-cutters.

Size. If your counters are to be die-cut, your die governs the size counters you can use, and that's that. (If you're playing in the leagues where the company will make a special die to fit your designs, have fun, and think kindly of us peons.) If your counter sheet is uncut, you can tailor the size (and shape) of your counters to fit design needs.

Color. The general wargaming convention is that color is used to distinguish the different sides. Even if you have only one color of ink (say, black), you can get three legible colors: black-on-white, black-on-gray, and white-on-black. (This last effect is called a "reverse." Make sure your printer can do it before you take him the finished art.) The more colors you have, the prettier you can get. When you get to full four-color process, your counters can quit being symbols and turn into actual representations of the object.

Backprinting Usually a backprinted counter is used to show one unit in two different states: alert/sleeping, full strength/depleted, healthy/wounded, loyal/rebel, . . . whatever the design requires. Sometimes it's just a way of getting twice as many counters: put Russian tanks on one side of the counter and Americans on the other, and let the side turned up depend on whether today's battle is East Front or West. You can also do "customer backprinting." If you're on a low budget and (for instance) have to distinguish between units with different values, all of which seem alike until encountered, you can have your customer mark them himself by writing on the backs. Definitely a low-rent operation, but acceptable if you're publishing on an amateur basis.

Cards

Many games require cards, of one sort or another, as components. These may be small (*Stellar Conquest*) or enormous (the alien cards in *Cosmic Encounter*) pieces of cardstock. Or they may be laminated like playing cards.

If you're going with cardstock, treat them as though they were counters. You've got all the same problems and choices: color, artwork/graphics, lettering, die-cutting. (With cards you have an alternative to die-cutting: perforation. Less expensive, but not as nice-looking.) Of course, a card can carry a lot more information and/or more detailed art than any counter can.

If you want playing-card quality components, you had best seek out a professional card printer. Check the Yellow Pages in your nearest large city.

Boxes

To box or not to box? That's basically a budget-and-sales rather than design decision. If you *do* box your game, you may want to print some of the rules (or charts) inside the box lid, so it can do double duty. In a role-playing game, the box can make a GM's shield.

A box is primarily a sales aid. It can make a game look more expensive – therefore it can sell for more. It's also a status symbol. When you have a boxed game, you're in the big leagues. The one practical purpose a box serves it to keep the game components together and protected – and a ziplock bag does this job better than some of the flimsy boxes on the market now.

If you do decide to box your game, try for a solid box. It will resist shipping better (which will keep the retailers happy), and last longer once bought (which will please your customers). And remember: the box art sells the game. Some companies seem to put most of their budget into designing brightly-colored and attractive boxes. The contents may be badly playtested and shabby, but those boxes will sell lots of games. I can't say I recommend this approach, but there's a lesson in it. If you have a box, make it pretty.

If you don't box a game, you can put it in a bag (ziplock or otherwise). Ziplock is an added expense, but worth it. Or you

can sell it in a paper envelope, as SPI does with some of their mail-order games. Yaquinto has recently introduced their "album games," packaged in a sort of double-record-album affair. This is the first new idea in game packaging to come around recently, and it looks to be successful. The albums look expensive and glossy, but are cheaper than boxes.

Play Aids

This category takes in the various items that you need in order to play the game – but which are available separately. The more expensive the game, the likelier it is that the customer will expect play aids to be included. A $20 game without dice will surprise the buyer; a $5 without dice seems reasonable.

My own view is that *no* play aid should be included if the customer can get it at the corner store. You may need a pencil to play some games – but you don't expect to find one in the box. It would be a pointless increase in cost. Similarly, graph paper (unless it's non-standard) can be omitted. You might give the buyer one sheet, to get him started. If he wants more, let him make copies.

Likewise, you don't want to include a whole pad of character/ship/city/planet/unit record sheets. Include one copy in a small game, or a half-dozen in a big game and let the buyer make copies as needed.

Dice are a special case. Six-sided dice are a standard item and can be omitted in low-ticket games. (Tiny dice are a novelty item, not a play aid. If you can't include dice of a useful size, don't include *any*.) Polyhedral dice are rare enough, even today, that a boxed game which requires them should *include* them. (TSR, I'm happy to note, has finally realized this.)

Too often, a few cheap play aids are included in a boxed game in order to justify a high price. Now that I've dutifully mentioned this strategy, let me ask you, as a designer, not to use it.

Oddball Components

Sometimes a game may require an unusual component, e.g., *Triplanetary*'s first edition included a large sheet of acetate, and some International Team games have fancy "combat wheels." In general, avoid these things unless they're absolutely necessary to the game. If they're expensive they can drive you to the wall. Even if they're cheap, they can keep you from selling the design to a major company: "Nice idea, Mr. Jones, but it doesn't fit our format . . ." Case in point: *Triplanetary*'s acetate sheet caused GDW all kinds of problems with packaging, and has now been replaced by a plastic map. And have you seen International Team's prices?

Not that originality in component design is *bad*. *Cosmic Encounter* is a classic, and practically *all* its components are non-standard. But they happen to be integral to the game, and the game happens to work. (I don't understand how Eon can make money on it, though.) Experimentation is great. Just remember that if you keep your experimentation along relatively standard lines your risk is less.

My own first set of games was an experiment in component design: the map-sheet, rules, charts, and tables for each game were supplied on a single sheet of paper, which the gamer cut apart. This proved workable – but (as mentioned above), the oversize rule-sheet was less convenient than a rulebook would have been. I'll modify the format somewhat for the next games published, but I won't scrap it entirely; I like the flexibility it offers.

New Directions

The future will surely see some worthwhile innovations in gaming components. High-ticket games may well start including actual miniatures (metal, plastic, or cardboard) for play. Certain "family" wargames (e.g., *Feudal*) already do this, and some miniature sets already include (very brief) game rules.

Counters don't have to be made out of cardboard. Our technology isn't quite up to solving all the problems that would come with plastic counters – but it's just a matter of time. A few years ago, plastic maps you could write on and erase were a pipe-dream. Now we have them in some games, and we will in others.

As computers continue to interface with wargames, a floppy disk or tape may become a standard component in some games.

At the other end of the scale, a "macrogame"' could be run on a web press like a newspaper, getting the rules and map all in one press run. Quality would be poor compared to some present-day products, but a truly gigantic map, and many pages of rules, could be produced for ten dollars rather than fifty or sixty.

There will definitely be advances – and each advance will suggest new directions in design. The only thing we can be sure the future holds is more variety.

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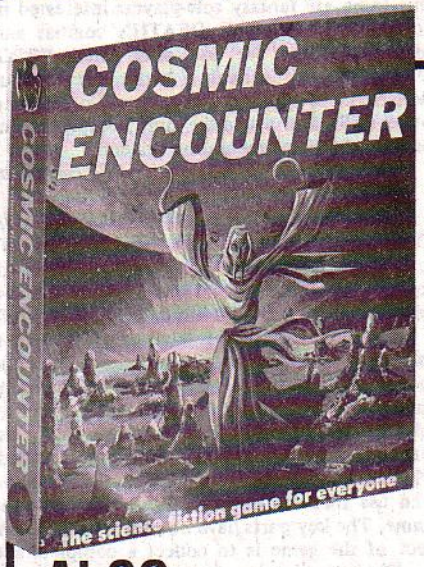

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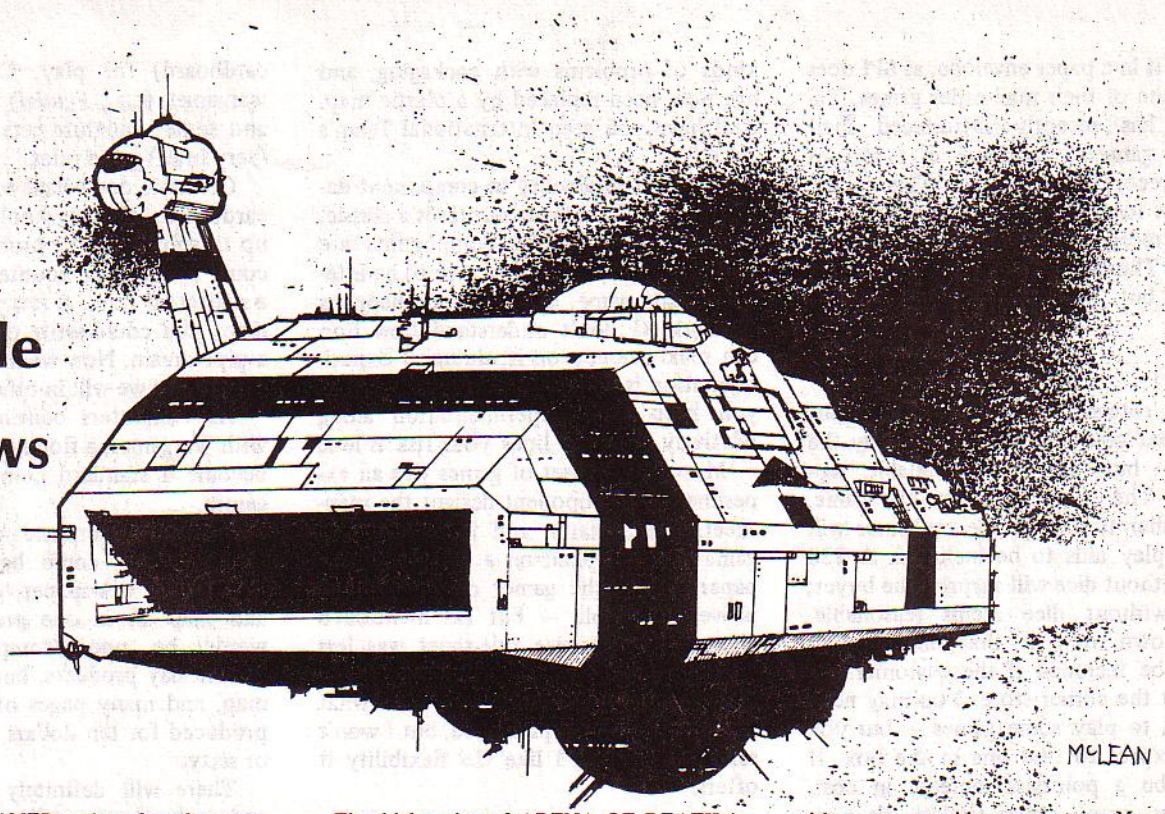

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Specific games for which we are seeking reviews include: *Apocalypse, Dark Stars, The Dragonlords, IPSP/ISIS Maps, Kung Fu 2100,* and *Pirateer.*

ARENA OF DEATH (SPI); $6.00. Designed by David James Ritchie. Boxed, with a 13-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 100 die-cut counters, a 17" x 22" mapsheet, and one set of randomizer chits. Two or more players; playing time varies. Published 1980.

ARENA OF DEATH is a game of arena combat using the combat system developed for *DragonQuest* (reviewed, TSG 31). Each player controls one or more combatants chosen either from one of five character races (human, elf, dwarf, halfling, orc), or from a list of monsters. Characters who survive the combat accrue experience points which may be traded in to increase a character attribute. The method for designing characters is: pick a race, assign the attribute points; select armor, shield, and weapons; start fighting.

The high point of ARENA OF DEATH is its combat system, which is based very closely on *DragonQuest*. Unfortunately, the result is a dull game. One-on-one combat amounts to a die-rolling contest. A free-for-all might be more interesting, if you could convince people to play.

The only people to whom I can recommend this game are fantasy role-players interested in adapting ARENA OF DEATH's combat and maneuver rules for use with their FRPG. *DragonQuest* is probably a better buy; for four dollars more you get monsters, magic, and other skills, and a slightly more complete combat and character generation system.

–Eric Paperman

DR. WHO (Games Workshop); $20.00. Designed by Derek Carver. Box includes 16" x 22" mapboard, 239 counters, 6 plastic tokens, 6 reference sheets, one 12-sided die. 2-6 players; playing time 1 hour. Published 1980.

This boardgame is loosely based on the British space opera series of the same name. The board is divided into 60 zones. Each contains an alien, a gadget and (possibly) part of the Key of Chronos (a super artifact only vaguely explained). The aliens exist solely to be killed. Players take the gadgets from the dead aliens, and use them to improve their position in the game. The key parts have no utility, but the object of the game is to collect a complete set.

The graphics are beautiful. The rules are brief and clean. However, there is little else to say for this game; it is too simple for most adult gamers.

Recommended to die-hard Dr. Who fans or to those who are beginning to find *Candyland* a little dull.

–Forrest Johnson

DUNGEON, 2nd Ed. (TSR); $10. Designed by David R. Megarry. Box includes 18" x 21" mapboard, 165 cards, 125 counters, 8 plastic tokens, 2 dice. 1-8 players; playing time 1-2 hours. Published 1975, revised 1980.

This is a boardgame, not an FRPG. Your character is an elf, hero, superhero, or wizard. The map represents a dungeon of six levels, with rooms, corridors, and stairs. Movement is simply 5 spaces a turn. Combat is resolved by simple dice rolls.

The graphics are improved over the earlier edition. Play is much cleaner. No longer is the map cluttered with cards – you draw a monster card when you enter a room, and a treasure card if you kill a monster. There is no more combat between players. A wizard can no longer win the game by immolating a few elves and heroes.

Unfortunately, a wizard *can* still win by cleaning out the upper levels, forcing the weaker players to the more dangerous part of the board. The dwarf class has been eliminated. The alternate classes from *Dragon* have been excluded. Whoever decided to make this simple game even simpler should have his brains impounded before he does more damage.

Recommended to rank beginners and the hopelessly drunk.

–Forrest Johnson

THE FURY OF THE NORSEMEN (Metagaming); $3.95. Designed by Keith Hendryx. Boxed, with 16-page rule booklet, die, 126 die-cut counters, and 12" x 14" map. For two players; playing time about one hour. Published 1980.

THE FURY OF THE NORSEMEN is a historical game simulating Viking raids on Western Europe during the 9th and 10th Centuries. One player controls the Viking forces who try to pillage and plunder the village player's town. The village player desperately tries to repulse the Norsemen with his household cavalry and small garrisons of soldiers.

The rules are complete and easy to understand. Combat is quick and simple. At first glance this game seems to be one-sided in favor of the Vikings but the villagers have a neat trick up their sleeves. They can say one little prayer – "From the fury of the Norsemen, oh Lord, deliver us" and invoke the Divine Wrath rule. Then the Vikings better do some praying of their own.

THE FURY OF THE NORSEMEN might get repetitive after a few games unless the players themselves really get "into" it.

THE FURY OF THE NORSEMEN is a quick playing, easy game. If you have courageous and barbaric spirit (as I'm sure most of us do) then this game is for you.

–Paul Manz

KINGS AND CASTLES (Athena Games, POB 9, Ames, IA 50010); $10. Designed by Sven Bauer. 32-page 5½" 8" rulebook, 16" x 22" mapsheet, 105 die-cut counters, 50 2" x 3¼" cards, reference sheets, 2 dice, bagged. 2-8 players; playing time 3-6 hours. Published 1980.

KINGS AND CASTLES is a fantasy board game. Players are individual warring kings. "Diplomatic, as well as, strategic qualities become more and more evident as players attempt to overthrow one another in the KINGS AND CASTLES arena." Each player plans, simultaneously, his movement for an entire year (15 turns) on the yearly program sheet. When everyone is finished plotting the players move one turn at a time. If two opposing forces enter the same areas, there is a chance of conflict. Combat takes place with each side adding up combat factors. For each factor, a card is pulled and the result applied to the enemy.

The greatest thing about KINGS AND CASTLES is its production and movement system. Players can build armies, cavalry, fortresses, and ships without anyone else knowing. Then you are allowed to maneuver these forces in such a way that it is practically impossible to predict the end location. Confrontations are the exception, not the rule.

KINGS AND CASTLES has some problems. There is no explanation why you are at war. Also the graphics are not the best. The map has several names on it, most of them illegible. The biggest "error" I found in KINGS AND CASTLES was in the game company's advertising campaign. What? You've never heard of KINGS AND CASTLES? Then you understand what I mean.

KINGS AND CASTLES is one of the best fantasy wargames that I have played in a long time. It has a high excitement value and is definitely worth buying. You won't get "stuck" with this one.

–Jerry Epperson

THE LORDS OF UNDEREARTH (Metagaming); $3.95. Designed by Keith Gross. 22-page rulebook, 84 die-cut counters, 12½" x 14" geomorphic map, one die, plastic pouch, boxed. One to two players; playing time 45-90 minutes. Published 1981.

Subterranean warfare – orcs vs dwarfs vs humans vs monsters in an underground labyrinth – is the theme of Metagaming's latest micro, THE LORDS OF UNDEREARTH. This is one of the better introductory fantasy games to come along for a while – certainly one of Metagaming's best non-TFT offerings in some time. Old-time fantasy gamers will probably find nothing new in THE LORDS OF UNDEREARTH, but newcomers – or old-timers looking for an hour or so of simple fun – won't go far wrong with this one. The game plays well; the rules are clearly written and scenarios are generally well thought out and fairly balanced.

The map for TLOU is nicely detailed – more so than most MicroGame maps – with rooms, stairs, tunnels, corridors, and hazards and can be cut up and rearranged for variety of play, though this isn't necessary for the scenarios included. The rule on cutting down the strength of a company unit attacking in or through a narrow corridor or tunnel is a nice touch – refreshing compared to some systems' handling of the same problem. And the game – though still boxed – is wrapped in an inner plastic pouch, just like the old micros (possibly in deference to those of us who care not at all for the cheap, fall-apart Milk Duds-like boxes?). The die is bigger, too!

There *are* problems. The die-cut counters are thin, flakey pasteboard type rather than the sturdier, partially-cut cardboard ones still used in TFT modules. Some of the rules are less than satisfying, such as the two- or three-column favorable shift given on the CRT to individuals fighting companies. The infiltration rule, which allows even a company to "slip through" an alerted enemy company in an adjacent hex, is misnamed at best. Some of the conversions from TLOU to ITL and vice versa are rather ambiguous. And there are several errors in the rules.

In spite of these difficulties, THE LORDS OF UNDEREARTH still qualifies as a game to be recommended to novice fantasy gamers and aficionados of *The Fantasy Trip* role-playing system. Fantasy veterans might find it an interesting diversion from their more complex endeavors as well.

–William A. Barton

SPACE WARRIOR (Argon Games, POB 12341, Raleigh, NC 27605); $3.95. Designed by Robert J. McCredie and Stephen G. Walburn. 6-page 5½" x 8" rulesheet, 11" x 17" mapsheet, 40 super-thin counters, 3 charts, bagged. 2 players; playing time 30 minutes up. Published 1980.

SPACE WARRIOR is a science fiction combat game. Players are either a boarding party or the crew of the defending spaceship. The designers assume that the combatants are mindless barbarians who kill without quarter.

SPACE WARRIOR plays very simply. It is

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a fast and dirty blood-bath type game. Fun, but not for serious gamers.

The designers assume that the reader is an experienced gamer and will know enough not to shoot or move through a wall (a fact that is only mentioned in the charts, not in the rules). Also the reader is called upon to figure out the effects that reloading a power-pack have on the weapon's ammunition supply. (I'm not sure that I understand it myself.)

SPACE WARRIOR could have used a little more work in the playtest and editing. If you do not like simple "move-in-kill-it-and-move-on" games, it is not for you. I would suggest *Snapshot* as a better alternative.

–Jerry Epperson

STAR FLEET BATTLES Designer's Edition (Task Force Games); $12.95. Designed by Stephen V. Cole. 44-page rulebook, one 22" x 20" map, 216 die-cut counters, 10 chart and table sheets, two plastic page protectors, two marking pencils, two dice, boxed. One to two (or more) players; playing time 1-5 hours. Published 1979.

STAR FLEET BATTLES (reviewed TSG 25) is Task Force Games' simulation of ship-to-ship combat in the *Star Trek* universe. The improvement over the earlier pocket version is extensive. Certain ambiguities in the rules have been corrected or clarified; several important new rules have been added as an "advanced game;" there are twice as many counters, some representing new ship types, allowing more action and variety; the Tholians and Orion Pirates have been included; the Kzinti fleet has finally become a force to be reckoned with, sporting attack shuttles, carriers, and more drones. The impulse movement system, though it may take a few playings to get used to, is far superior to either the old "I-move-then-fire; you-move-then-fire" or "simultaneous-written-order" movement systems used in other space battle games, allowing for more realistic simultaneous movement and for weaponry fire during movement. This avoids the ludicrous situation in which both sides pass each other at optimum firing points yet must wait until end of movement to fire, as can happen in some games. The free movement method of advanced game even eliminates the basic game nuisance of plotting movement each turn. This speeds up play and allows course changes to counter enemy action during a turn. However, I recommend plotted movement for ships moving at high speeds even if free movement is used – even computer reaction time is sure to be reduced at Warp-3 and above.

With a game as ambitious as STAR FLEET BATTLES, there are bound to be problems. Oversights are still evident in the rules, especially in the advanced game (though many are corrected in the new expansion kit). And there are minor omissions in some of the SSDs. Not enough counters are provided with the game to play some of the scenarios (my biggest gripe) unless two or more games are combined. TFG should seriously consider selling counter sheets separately. And some aspects of the game remain unbalanced: The point system for rating ships is quite misleading. Anyone doubting this should pit a 20-point Federation Destroyer against a 21-point Kzinti Light Cruiser.

All in all, I'd have to give my whole-hearted recommendation to STAR FLEET BATTLES. I find it a most satisfying game. I would, however, caution Trekkers who are inexperienced at simulations gaming to start with a less complex space combat game before trying SFB. But those of you who are old hands, if you haven't yet taken the helm of the U.S.S. Enterprise or one of its sister ships, then boldly go to your local game store and pick up a copy.

–William A. Barton

VOYAGE OF THE B.S.M. PANDORA (SPI); $6.00. Designed by John H. Butterfield with Edward J. Woods. 16-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 11" x 17" mapsheet, 100 die-cut counters, 2 dice, boxed. One player; playing time one to three hours. Published 1981.

This game simulates the hypothetical voyage of a biological survey mission space ship in the distant future. The player attempts to capture as many alien creatures and artifacts as possible, with a minimum loss of life and equipment.

The game is amazingly "realistic," with eight possible land surfaces and extensive planetary data squeezed attractively onto the game board. What makes the game work is a system of 232 narrative paragraphs describing the course of action. Players progress from one narrative to the next according to their own decisions and random chance. The end result is like reading a science fiction novel in which you are the main character.

Unfortunately, the very thing that makes the game so appealing is also its biggest drawback. The first several games are interesting and exciting, but the game becomes boring and repetitive as the player becomes familiar with the narrative paragraphs. As a game, the VOYAGE OF THE B.S.M. PANDORA lacks durability, although the game-life could be extended by the release of additional paragraphs.

Overall, I would recommend this game to anyone who enjoys science fiction literature and has an itching to be a character in the book. The game is an excellent compromise between a novel and a role-playing game.

–Milo B. Shiff

WARLOCK (Games Workshop); $20 (about $4 cheaper in England). Designed by Bob Connor. Rigid 8½" x 11" map, 136 illustrated cards, 24 plastic tokens and counters, 6 record sheets, boxed. 2-6 players; playing time 2 hours. Published 1980.

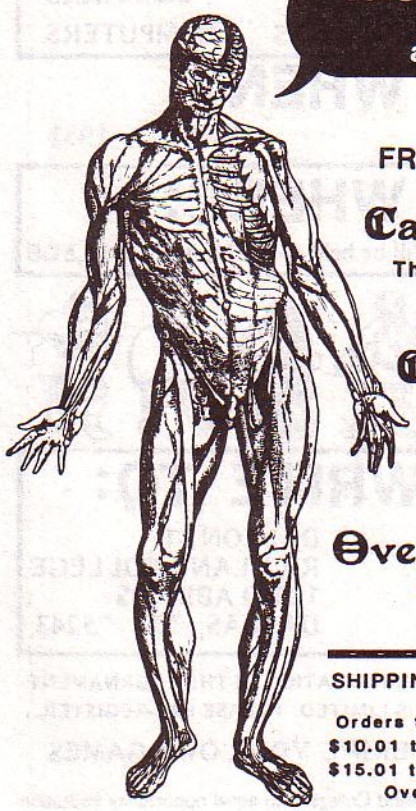
WARLOCK is a card game. Wizards duel by conjuring up dragons, dwarves, heroes and so forth, sometimes casting thunderbolts or forked lightning – the spell tables are extensive. Losers go to limbo, and may return as long as they have magic points. Usually, there can be but one winner . . . though shared victory is possible.

The play can be exciting – as your magic points get low, as your opponent frantically searches his hand for something to reflect a gorgon's stare, as you check to see whether someone else's trolls are going to wander off and attack you by mistake. The components are top notch; the art is masterful.

Unfortunately, some of those beautiful components are redundant. (This is a *card* game; it needs a map about as much as poker does.) Searching extensive spell tables is no fun; a lot of that information would have been better placed on the cards. Some of the rules are ambiguous. (Is it cricket for one wizard to poke another wizard with his magic sword? Why isn't it on the table?)

WARLOCK is too complicated for a parlor game, but does not allow enough strategy for a good wargame. A nice try, but overdesigned, overpackaged, and overpriced.

–Forrest Johnson



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SUPPLEMENTS

ISLE OF DREAD (TSR); $5.50. Designed by David Cook and Tom Moldvay. Introductory scenario for *Expert D&D*. 8½" x 11" 32-page booklet, 11" x 17" cardstock mapsheet and wraparound cover. Released 1981.

An introductory scenario must, first and foremost, be an enjoyable adventure. It must also provide a "working model," so that beginning DMs can see how to construct and organize an adventure. And it must be easily read, that the novice referee not become lost and confused with travelling from Crypt 1 to Village 3.

This adventure goes a long way towards accomplishing those goals. The scenario itself, set on an island whose simple human culture bears tinges of Polynesian and Amerind societies, is relatively tame, but provides some tense moments. Enough variable situations are presented to keep the whole thing from becoming static. More important, in this instance, is the module's organization as a prototype. It does well here, too; almost all the maps can be removed and the appropriate text descriptions are clearly keyed to the proper maps. This scenario cannot be played cold, which is also a necessary experience for a novice DM; it must first be read through and assessed.

No real problems evidence themselves. As noted, this adventure will not appeal to experienced players; there is a certain lack of color or sweep to the whole thing.

Recommended to beginners only – but it says so on the cover.

–Aaron Allston

LEVIATHAN (GDW); $4.98. Designed by Bob McWilliams. Adventure for *Traveller*. One 6" x 9" 44-page booklet. One referee and four to eight players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

LEVIATHAN takes player-characters into the Outrim Void, an area beyond the established borders of the Imperium, fraught with danger from pirate corsairs, Zhodani patrols, rival merchant cartels, unknown worlds, and even the Imperial Grand Survey Branch of the Impeiral Scout Service. As with all *Traveller* adventures, LEVIATHAN is complete with rumors, library data on all topics relevant to the adventure, and pre-generated characters for use as player-characters or NPCs. This adventure also includes complete data on two new subsectors and deck plans and full specifications for the *Leviathan*-class Merchant Cruiser.

Of particular interest to *Traveller* players will be the two new subsectors, Pax Rulin and Egyrn, located to rimward of the Spinward Marches. Pax Rulin includes a new client state, the Senlis Foederate, and Egyrn features several "asterisked" star systems – unknowns the players must explore for possible sources of trade. The *Leviathan*-class cruiser will prove a welcome addition to the *Traveller* fleet, useful in many other situations beyond the present adventure. And we at last learn the specifics concerning the ubiquitous Zhodani *Shivva*-class patrol frigate, tantalizingly mentioned in *Twilight's Peak*.

The only problem evident with LEVIATHAN is occasional sketchiness. Just enough information is given in the library data and elsewhere to merely whet the appetite of the confirmed *Traveller*-addict. Also, some refs may miss the programmed aspects of adventures such as *Twilight's Peak* and *Research Station Gamma* in LEVIATHAN, which is much more open-ended than those two, more like Adventure 1, *The Kinunir*. (Others will no doubt rejoice in the greater freedom of such an approach.)

Whatever a ref's individual taste, he will surely find LEVIATHAN a worthy addition to the expanding universe of *Traveller* – and a pretty good adventure to boot.

–William A. Barton

SECURITY STATION (Metagaming); $3.95. Designed by John W. Colbert. Adventure for *The Fantasy Trip*. One 48-page rulebook, 1 sheet of counters, 13½" x 8" map, 1 die, boxed. 1-5 players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

One to three characters brave the corridors and rooms of an "ancient" high-tech fallout shelter, transported to Cidri eons ago by Mnoren magic. SECURITY STATION is suitable for use as a solitaire game, a 2-4 player game or a full-blown refereed adventure. All necessary rules are included, so those who own only *Melee* and *Wizard* will have no problems playing – though *In the Labyrinth* is recommended for fullest enjoyment. Players may portray experienced characters of any humanoid race except centaur or giant.

SECURITY STATION has several noteworthy features. Players may not just take any weapons they wish; the station is located in a metal-poor region. A die roll determines

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how many large metal weapons or sets of armor are allowed. The high-tech nature of the labyrinth makes for some unique twists also – warped magic areas where spells cost twice or half as much as usual, strange artifacts, and some pretty nasty traps.

Unfortunately, the technological labyrinth idea was not fully developed. Too many of the battles turn out to be with the same old giants, dragons, giant snakes and fighters. A combination of highly experienced characters and a good roll on the weapons table can unbalance a lot of the situations. Also, the numbered instructions seem incomplete in places.

In spite of such flaws, SECURITY STATION should prove an interesting and possibly profitable/fatal adventure for your TFT characters.

–William A. Barton

TRADERS & GUNBOATS, *Traveller* supplement 7 (GDW); $3.98. Designed by Marc Miller (with Frank Chadwick, John Harshman, Loren Wiseman and Bob Liebman). One 48-page 6" x 9" booklet. Playing time and number of players indefinite. Published 1981.

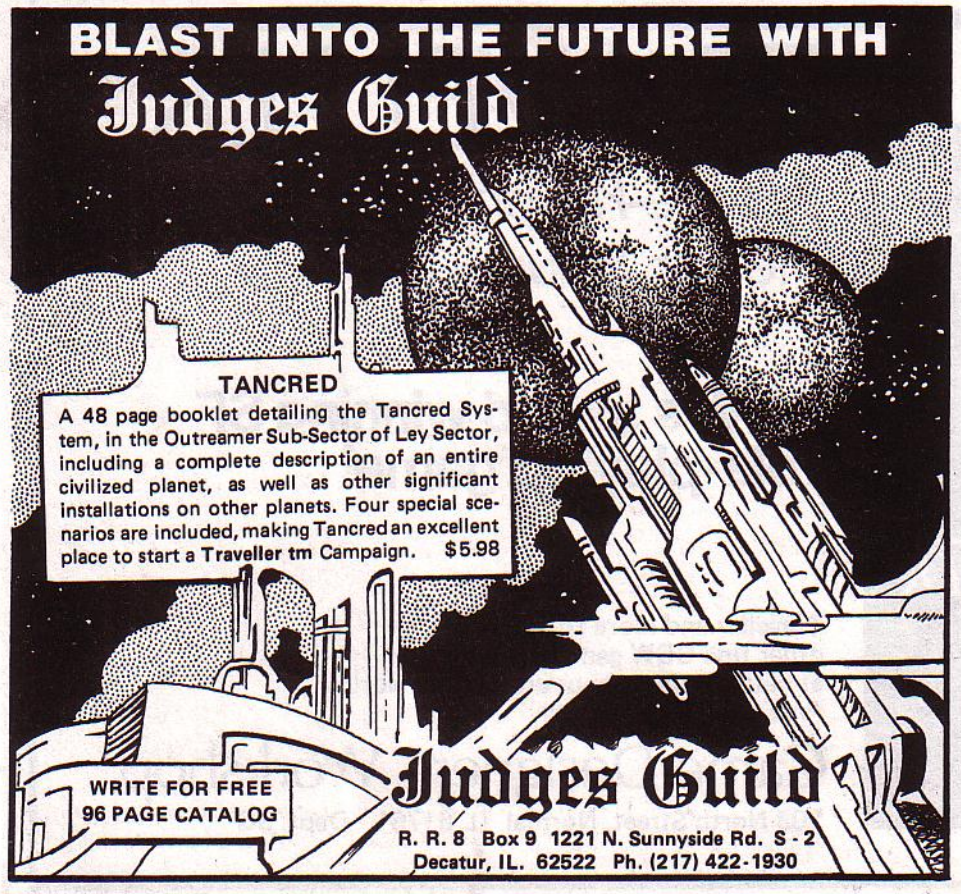
TRADERS & GUNBOATS, GDW's 7th supplement for its SF RPG *Traveller,* supplies descriptions and deck plans for eight major ship types and four small craft to be found plying the spaceways of the Imperium. Stats, plans, and illustrations are provided for the Xboat and Tender and the Type S Scout/Courier; the Type R Subsidized Merchant, and the Type A2 Far Trader and the Type J Seeker; the Type CE Close Escort, and the Type SB System Defense Boat; and the launch, ship's boat, pinnace, and cutter. Also covered are the air/raft, a special launch for the Type R, a seeker buggy for the Type J and an armed gig for the close escort. While several of these ships have been at least partially described or laid out elsewhere, others are brand new to the *Traveller* universe.

The ship plans are all nicely conceived and well detailed. Especially welcome will the the Xboat Tender and the System Defense Boat with its detachable jump-cable shuttle. The special features of these two ships – such as the "pop-up" turret on the Tender and the underwater capabilities of the SDB – make them particularly nasty vessels to use as corsairs in pirate enocunters. The new encounter tables make possible much more interesting situations than the regular tables, even allowing encounters with the *Kinunir*-class battlecruisers, *Azanti*-class frontier cruisers and *Leviathan*-class merchant cruisers.

Alas, not all is perfect. Various areas on the ship plans are numbered, yet are not explanied in the accompanying text, leaving it up to the player to guess at what is what. Some of the illustrations are a bit difficult to reconcile with the plans. And the Merchant Encounters table instructs that a +4 DM is to be used in systems inaccessible to jump-1 ships, yet renders this useless in some cases. Finally, it is interesting to note the significant differences between earlier versions of some of these ships and those in TRADERS & GUNBOATS. The Type S Scout differs in internal detail from both the Judges Guild and *Snapshot* plans; the Type R is radically dissimilar to the Guild version, its illustration looking like nothing so much as a flying humpback whale; and the close escort displays substantial changes from its earlier incarnation in *Traveller's Journal* 4.

Overall, TRADERS & GUNBOATS' assets far outweigh its few liabilities, making it a work of value it all *Traveller*ites.

–William A. Barton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PLAY AIDS

THE ASTROGATORS CHARTBOOK (Judges Guild); $3.98. 94-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Published 1980.

THE ASTROGATORS CHARTBOOK includes three sets of mapping grids and a solar system display, all in black on heavy paper. The first set of blank maps are 5mm hex grids in the unusual triangular shape used in *Traveller* planetary maps. On the same page with these isocahedron maps is the solar system display which consists of two lines marked off in millions of miles and kilometers, for placing planets and asteroids. The second set is the standard numbered hex grid in hex shape from JG's *Campaign Hexagon System,* usable to enlarge any one hex of another map. The third set is composed of one-fifth inch grids which is suggested to be used for buildings and structures.

Judges Guild has done their usual efficient job in supplying an indexing page and planet, terrain, and building notation keys for use or adaptation. On the opposite side of each map is a lined page for notes, names, locations, and such. And JG has graciously allowed, in writing, players to photocopy all of these for personal use.

Considering the cost of photocopying all these maps out of a friend's copy, it is worth buying the book. The types of grids picked for inclusion are the most current in *Traveller* usage. It is a must for all *Traveller* referees.

–Richard A. Edwards

CARDBOARD HEROES (SJ Games); $3.00. Painted by Denis Loubet. 40 cardboard 25mm figures, multi-colored. For use with fantasy role-playing systems. Released 1980.

For those of you who want miniatures but don't have the artistic ability to paint them, and for those of you who can't afford a nice array of fantasy miniatures at today's ever-increasing prices – here is a possible solution to your problems. CARDBOARD HEROES is a set of multi-colored 25mm fantasy figures printed on hard cardboard stock. The figures in this first set are ideal for player characters in most fantasy role-playing systems, and future sets of baddies and monsters are planned. The cardboard is uncut, and comes in a plastic bag the size of most "micro" games.

All you have to do is look to see the strong point of this set . . . the figures are beautiful! Denis Loubet has outdone himself on these tiny little artistic endeavors, and if I ever meet him, I'll be the first in line to shake his hand.

Whether this type of so-called miniatures set is weak or not is strictly a matter of taste. Even though I can't paint them well, I like traditional miniatures. To me, these are weak substitutes – but again, that's a matter of taste. Another complaint that I have is that the figures are not die-cut. It is explained that this keeps down the cost and that the machines, in their inaccuracy, might scalp the characters. Still, an elbow jostled at the wrong time or a slip of the scissors could cut off the foot of my favorite character. Machines, with their nice straight lines will still do a better job than many humans. I'd have preferred them pre-cut.

There isn't much more to say about these – they are beautiful, they are inexpensive, and if you like them and have no objection to cardboard, they are certainly worthwhile.

–Martin Feldman

GORP (FJC); free with playtest sessions. One large can, yellow lid, varying amounts of peanuts, peanut sticks, yogurt raisins, sunflower seeds, cashews, dried fruit. Designed by Forrest Johnson.

This substance, created by the popularizer of the Inane Bedroom Door Bulletin Board, is provided free to numbers of unwitting laboratory rats on a weekly basis. It is touted as being "compatible with any fantasy role-playing game . . . or any game, for that matter," but is not necessarily compatible with all sorts of digestive systems.

GORP is a fine item for the gaming world, and is a very versatile play aid. It may easily be ground into any carpet style, as it tends to blend in with any color scheme. Different scenarios are presented each week as the formula changes.

It's suffered some problems in recent months, though. The withdrawal of the M&M squadron for political reasons put off a number of GORP's regular followers. Some variations fail utterly, leaving the frustrated gamer unwilling even to throw particles down opponents' V-necks and blouses.

I'd give GORP a qualified recommendation, for sheer perseverance and occasional high points.

–Errant Allsome

THE UNKNOWN GODS (Judges Guild); $6. Designed by Bob Bledsaw, Mark Holmer, Paul Jaquays, and Mike Petrowski. One 8½" x 11", 46-page booklet. Approved for use with *Dungeons & Dragons.* Published 1980.

This is a compendium of "original" deities not specifically drawn from real mythologies. Each god or goddess is set up as per *Deities and Demigods*, with the addition of a "disposition chart;" roll 1d6 and you know that Vidmor, Bee Goddess, is hot-tempered today.

There are a number of good points to THE UNKNOWN GODS. The deities given here represent most human or demihuman species and classes, as well as forces of nature and emotion. Each deity has notes of varying completeness as to his personality, totems, and battle tactics. An illustration accompanies each description: most of the art is by Paul Jaquays. The disposition roll is elegant and useful, though in very few cases will different rolls produce the same disposition in a god; most deities appear to spend equal time among six different attitudes. Some of the deities are quite intriguing and original.

Others aren't. I'd like to know which of the authors claims to have created Thanatos, God of Death, for example. Some gods are just dull – "Let's choose a topic and make up a god for it." Who *cares* about Erion, the Dog God? Also, the book by its very nature is composed of fragments. There is no effort toward arranging pantheons or notes giving recommendations on how to do so. Mortal heroes and demigods are also absent, though some of the gods listed are of such low power and hit points that they could be demigods instead.

This could be a useful volume, especially for DMs whose players are too familiar with the traditional gods. I'd recommend it to referees who suffer from a difficulty in creating deities.

–Aaron Allston

MINIATURES

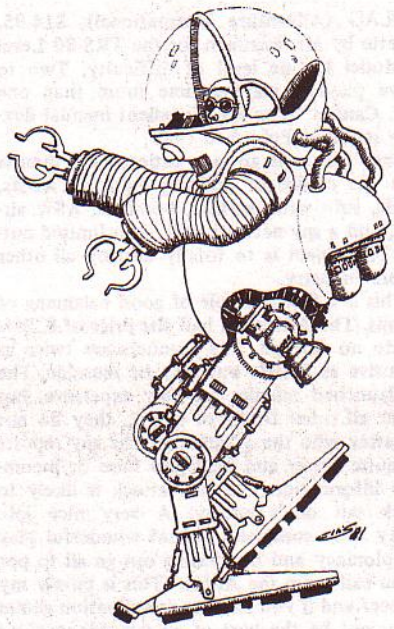
WIZARDS AND LIZARDS (Superior Models, Inc.); varied prices, most over $1 per figure. 25mm lead fantasy miniatures. Sculptor unknown. Released 1980.

These are beautiful figures – up to Superior's usual quality. The style is very similar to Ral Partha's . . . in fact, once painted, they could be played with Ral Partha figures with no problem at all. Detail and posing are excellent, proportions good to fair. Many of the figures are very imaginative, especially the "Dark Lord," the "Knight," and the "Super Hero." One set of these figures is straight fantasy, and one is Arthurian series. There's also a "Norse Gods" line, which we haven't seen, and a dragon who is well-enough designed that his wings will actually stay on once glued.

The only nit I can pick is with the price. At $4 to $4.50 for a set of four 25mm figures, these are at the top end of the market. Our local hobby shop breaks down the packages and sells figures singly, which will make it more convenient for buyers (the packaging is nothing special, anyway).

If you're into 25mm lead, these are a "must see." Even at these high prices, there will be some you'll want.

–Steve Jackson



COMPUTER GAMES

GALACTIC TRADER (Cybernautics, POB 40132, San Francisco, CA 94140); $14.98. Tape for 16K Level II TRS-80. 10 levels of play. One player; playing time approximately one hour.

The object of GALACTIC TRADER is simple: make money. You were once a great general but now the war is over and you command only one small ship. With your ship, 1000 credits, and 1000 liters of fuel, you must travel the galaxy and trade your goods for other goods which are worth more (or less if you are not careful). (The galaxy consists of about 15 planets.) Running out of fuel will often turn a rich man into a dead one.

The game allows for a variety of commands. Each game is different in that planets are randomly placed at the beginning of each game. The program also restricts the player from returning to a base by introducing the possibility of assassination and the formation of cartels. The computer also proves to be a tough trade partner.

Unfortunately, once a figure is entered it cannot be changed. (This may sound trivial, but ofttimes it is deadly.) Yet the biggest problem is that the game is made too easy. The problem is the central computer, which will tell the player how much fuel is needed to reach a given planet, provide trade records, etc.

Overall, a good game despite its flaws. Although the $14.95 price tag might be a bit high, I must recommend this game for anyone who likes playing games against the computer.

–Glenn Mai

HELLFIRE WARRIOR (Automated Simulations); $39.95. Designed by Jeff Johnson and Jon Freeman. Program on disk or cassette for the Apple, TRS-80, and PET. One player; playing time hours or days. Can be saved. Published 1980.

This is the latest in Automated Simulations' *Dunjonquest* series (reviewed TSG 31). There are four levels, supposedly stacked below the *Temple of Apshai.* Somewhere on the bottom level sleeps the warrior queen Brynhild. Every level is accessible from the surface, but your long-term goal is to find Brynhild and drag her unconscious body past the dragons, demons, and undead creatures guarding it. Oh . . . and be careful not to step in any hell fire . . . and look out for Death . . . and . . .

This is definitely the most ambitious *Dunjonquest* to date. The "innkeeper" subroutine has been expanded; there is now an "apothecary" and a "magic shoppe." One can buy a draught of "Troll's Blood" (I recommend it!) or have his sword enchanted. The characters are

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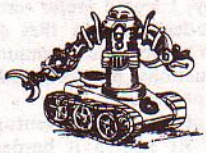

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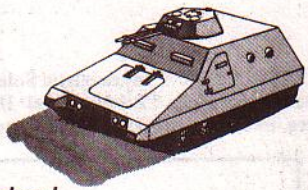

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more powerful, and the monsters fiercer, than in the previous adventures.

HELLFIRE WARRIOR can be exciting, but it also can be monotonous. My character, Sanson, killed over a hundred monsters on one trip. The hundredth fight was definitely not as interesting as the first. The hacking can get tedious; some of the monsters have a jillion hit points. Your character's attributes seem to go down a lot faster than up. Worst, finding Brynhild is purely a matter of luck; most players will have to decode the hints given in the rulebook.

Still, I won't forget my last view of Sanson – badly wounded, crawling desperately towards the exit, with sweet-but-cumbersome Brynhild in tow and an outraged fiend at his heels. If you enjoyed the earlier games, HELLFIRE WARRIOR is a must.

–Forrest Johnson

LABYRINTH (Med Systems Software, POB 2674, Chapel Hill, NC 27514); $12.95. Cassette for the 16K TRS-80 Level II Model I. One player; playing time many hours. Can be saved. Published 1980.

Unbelievable! When you are at a crossway between paths and look down the hall you actually LOOK DOWN THE HALL! The walls recede in the distance, with the various doors and pits clearly visible. Slowly your torch flickers and your food supply gets eaten. The command list seems large, but all normal movement is via the arrow keys. The clues and tools that will allow you to kill the Minotaur are scattered through the maze. There are endless twists and turns and I freely admit to having not yet gotten it all together before a strange fog envelops me and I am ripped asunder again.

The program's strongest feature is undoubtedly the graphics. None of this description nonsense. What you see is what you get. The machine language graphics are literally faster than the eye and there is almost a motion picture effect as you run down a long hall.

The flaws are fairly minor. The lack of a keyboard debounce can leave a player hopelessly lost as your single left turn occurs three times. The walls are mostly identical, so takes a lot of backtracking to insure you really are where you plotted yourself to be. I also think the program could be enhanced with some sort of sound routine. Lastly, I would prefer some warning of the instant-death events that do occur. It is possible to escape the oncoming Minotaur in certain situations, but frequently one dies without a note of warning.

This is truly one of the best adventure games by any criteria. At $12.95 it borders on unbelievable. Believe it. Buy it.

–J. Mishcon

PARSECTOR V (Synergistic Solar); $19.95. Cassette for the TRS-80 Level II Model I. Three levels of difficulty. One or two players; playing time 3 hours. Cannot be saved. Published 1980.

Using a split screen, each player maneuvers on his own board while trying to scout out the opponent's moves. Your mother ship uses her limited allotment of time to produce three types of fleet battle craft ("Fyters, cruzers, and bases") or fire energy weapons. You can win by owning 68%+ of the galaxy or draining your opponent's energy banks.

The game is very complex and the instruction manual only gives the barest guidelines on how best to play. Fortunately, the computer opponent does make for interesting play. I can promise many hours of study on how best to play any given situation. The split screen adds lovely "fog of war" touch. The graphics are quite adequate and a photocopiable navigation chart is provided to ease play.

My only complaint might be that this long and complex game cannot be saved. If you're like me it's hard to leave any one thing on the computer for so long a period of time.

This is worth a try for all those who enjoy complex games with the "fog of war."

–J. Mishcon

SLAG (Adventure International); $14.95. Cassette by Mr. Eastman for the TRS-80 Level II, Model I. One level of difficulty. Two to twelve players; playing time more than one hour. Cannot be saved. Excellent manual dexterity required. Published 1980.

Each player is given a nation. One then is given the choice of building industry, ABMs, ICBMs, subs with missiles, bombers, ASW aircraft, and a spy network with your limited output. The object is to totally destroy all other players' industry.

This is a fine example of good balancing of options. The ABMs are half the price of ICBMs but do no damage. The bombers are twice as expensive as ICBMs but may be reusable. The sub launched missiles are very expensive, but unlike all other forms of attack, they do not give away who the attacker is. The spy reports are quite clever and may give false or incomplete information. No one attack is likely to knock out one's enemy. A very nice job.

My only complaint is that wonderful play at diplomacy and purchasing can go all to pot if you can't aim the ABMs. (This is purely my pet beef and if you are into coordination games this might be the best of all possible worlds.) Nonetheless, I feel the czar or president is unlikely to be sitting at the firing station aiming his ABMs as the missiles and bombers fly overhead. Each bomber or missile you let through destroys one industry.

All in all a well balanced game with a lot of very nice options, but a game that heavily depends on your hand-eye coordination to shoot down those missiles. Buy it only if you're really into coordination.

–J. Mishcon

WRITING REVIEWS FOR THE SPACE GAMER

Capsule Reviews

Most of the reviews we print will be "capsule" reviews – 400 words or less. We pay $5 for each capsule review accepted. We want to run a review for *every* new s-f or fantasy game or supplement.

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long and contain:

(1) Basic information. Present these facts, in this order: NAME OF GAME (Publisher); price. Designer. (If applicable: "Supplement to ---," "Companion to ---," or similar note.) Format: list of components, with sizes of maps and rulebooks, number of counters, etc. Number of players; playing time. Publication date.

(2) General description of the game: background, the sides, course of play, special features, etc.

(3) Strong points. Discuss what is good about the game; in every game, there IS something worthwhile. "Fun" is a useless adjective. Be specific.

(4) Weak points. Every game has its problems, too. If the only faults you can find are minor ones, say so. If the game is fatally flawed, come right out and SAY SO. If you can phrase your criticisms as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation. Your overall opinion of the game. Who should and should not buy it, and why.

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name *will* be printed. No game may be reviewed by its designer, by a playtester, or by an employee of the publisher. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!) Final note: If you can write a complete review in less than the full 400 words, by all means do so.

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him decide whether he wants to buy that game. Keep that in mind when you write. This is a short review, *not* a complete analysis. For those who want to write longer reviews, each issue will have one or two –

Featured Reviews

These will be game reviews 1,000 to 2,000 words long. They should contain *all the above information,* plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. A featured review may cover either a new game or one that has been on the market for some time. If TSG has not already printed a capsule review, write one and submit it at the same time. We may even use both.

There are 100 systems in the Empyrean Cluster. Your goal – conquest! To win, you'll have to use your resources efficiently . . . improve your technology . . . build ships and colonies . . . ally wisely . . . and fight decisively. EMPYREAN CHALLENGE has not three or four – or even 15 – but 150 players per game.

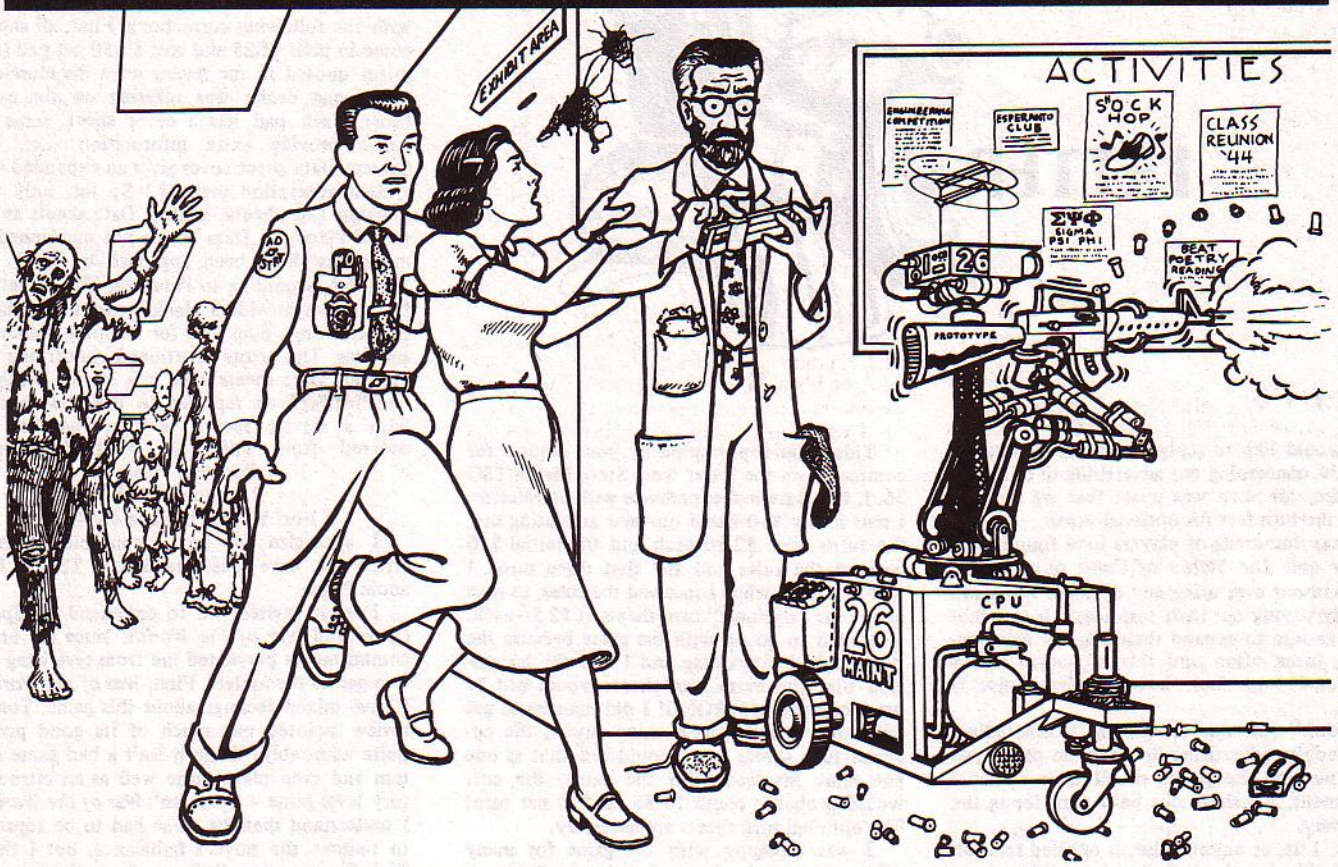
Fully computer-moderated; turns approximately every 5-6 weeks. Turn fees: $4.00, or .04 per order line, or .20 per ship or colony (whichever is greater) per turn.

EMPYREAN CHALLENGE

Send $5.89 (rules only) or $21.89 (rules, $4 setup fee, and $12 advance turn fees) to:

SUPERIOR SIMULATIONS / 524 Franklin Park Circle, Dept. SG-2 / Boise, ID 83709

YOU ARE EARTH'S ONLY HOPE!



The professor and his team of experts work frantically to perfect the "Ad Astra" project at the university's science center. Just moments before they are ready to conduct their final test the outer halls of the building shatter as the radioactive mutants of a devastated Earth attack!

Can you as the Human player hold off the fearsome attack of the Mutants? Can you as the Mutant player defeat the humans and their brave little robots before they escape?

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This special introductory version of "Attack of the Mutants" is yours FREE when you send $2.00 for our catalog of games.

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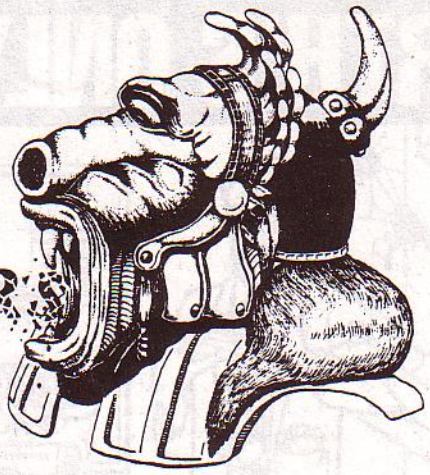
The Barbarians	$8.00	Battle	$8.00	Time War	$14.00
Beachhead	$8.00	Fast Attack Boats	$8.00	Shooting Stars	$16.00

Check or Money Order must accompany all orders. Sorry no C.O.D's. Allow three to four weeks for delivery.

LETTER



I would like to reply to Mr. List's letter in issue 36 concerning our advertising of our basic turn fee. Mr. List was upset that we did not detail the turn fees for optional turns.

Many hundreds of players have found *StarMaster* and *The Tribes of Crane* quite enjoyable without ever using any optional turns and so only paying our basic turn fee. It is true that some choose to expand their play by using optional turns often and this of course means additional turn fees; however the choice is theirs.

I don't feel our advertising is misleading. Automobile advertising lists a basic price, but does not list the prices of all their optional equipment. We show our basic turn fee in the same way.

Mr. List, or anyone else, is entitled to a full refund if he is not satisfied with anything about our game when he receives his materials or takes his first turn. I think our policy is completely fair and Mr. List's complaint unfounded.

George V. Schubel
Schubel & Son

I am moved to write concerning the advertisement in TSG 36 for Schubel & Son, especially as you have invited comments following the Steven List letter. In the ad, Schubel & Son claim "Fast turnaround times for turns." This has not been my experience.

I sent the initial turn of *StarMaster* on 15 May, 1980 and received turn 1 in mid-June. Turn 2 arrived back in 5 weeks. After waiting 8 weeks I concluded that something had gone astray with turn 3 and sent it again. In 4 weeks the return came informing me that they had received the previous submission and has returned it by surface mail. It arrived one week later. Turn 4 was returned immediately and sent in the first week in December. I have seen nothing more in 7 weeks. In summary I have received and sent to Schubel & Son 4 turns of *StarMaster* in 8½ months!

Lest it be thought that international airmail is slow I would point out the following. In 4 years of playing FBI's *StarWeb* I have received and sent over 400 turns and perhaps 3 times that in private correspondence to the U.S. Airmail takes an average of 7 days and 5 days is not uncommon. Finally, I also play *Universe II*. Clemens & Associates return my turns in 3 weeks and FBI turns around in less than 4 weeks nowadays.

A.D. Young
Mt. Eliza, Australia

This letter is prompted by your request for comments on the letter from Steve List in TSG 36. I, too, have had experience with *StarMaster*. I sent in my $10 based on their ad stating that the turns were $2.50 each and the initial $10 covered the rules and the first three turns. I was surprised, when I received the rules, to read about the "optional" turn sheets at $2.50 each. I decided to go on with the game because the rules looked interesting and I had the impression that the extra turn sheets would not be used very often. WRONG! I did manage to get my three turns without using any of the optional turn sheets but I could tell that as one got more involved with the game, the cost would probably climb to $5 to $10 per turn! The optional turn sheets are necessary.

I was unhappy with the game for many other reasons. A game of such complexity is bound to generate many questions. I usually had about 2 pages of questions to send in with each turn. Although the questions were answered promptly, I felt that the answers often didn't make sense in the context of the game. Also the answers given on one turn would conflict with the answers given the next turn. I asked several occasions that the person answering the questions be identified either by name or by some type of code. They never did, and I never knew who to address my questions to or if the same person was giving the answers.

For the above reasons I decided to quit the game after my initial $10 expense and try *Empyrean Challenge*. This is also a very complex game that generated many questions on my part. I have not yet received my first turn, but all my questions were answered quickly, by an identifiable person and the answers seem to make sense. I am looking forward to the start of the game.

Jeffrey M. Katz
Riverside, CA

When I saw your review of my *Duck Pond* in TSG 36 I couldn't resist dropping you a short note.

My desire to do *Duck Pond* was indeed prompted by the review of *Duck Tower* in TSG 29. I seem to react to favorable reviews. A favorable review of *Portals of Torsh* published in *The Dragon* prompted me to do another Portals project ("*Portals of Irontooth*").

Have no fear, though. Your most recent review has not convinced me to do another Duck Project. I am now into Baboons.

Rudy Kraft
Palo Alto, CA

Unfortunately, some errors crept into my review of Paranoia Press' *Traveller* record sheets in TSG due to my having access to an earlier printing than the sheets currently available. Don Rapp of Paranoia has kindly provided me with the following corrections. First, all sheets come in pads of 25 and cost $2.50 per pad (the prices quoted in the review were the close-out prices one dealer was offering on the early runs). Each pad has a cover sheet, some of which provide extra information (i.e., the System Data sheet cover gives an expanded star system generation method.) So far, only the Starship Log sheets, System Data sheets and a set of Planetary Data sheets not mentioned in my review have been approved by GDW for *Traveller*, according to Paranoia. The Planetary Data sheets provide a blank hexagonal-surfaced dodecahedron map grid for mapping planetary surfaces. The errors mentioned concerning the Personal Data sheets were in a section on skills which has been replaced in the new edition with a service record section. Pads can be ordered from Paranoia's business address:

Paranoia Press
P.O. Box 12614
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46846

I apologize for any inconvenience these errors may have caused readers of TSG or Paranoia Press.

Forrest invited me to commend on *Space Opera* and *War of the Worlds*, since my other commitments prevented me from reviewing the two games themselves. First, *War of the Worlds*. I have mixed feelings about this game. Tony's review pointed out much of its good points quite admirably. While it isn't a bad game system and even plays quite well as an introductory level game – it just isn't *War of the Worlds*! I understand that the game had to be adjusted to remove the novel's imbalance, but I think Task Force went a little too far in the opposite direction in seeking balance. When a single 19th-century *horse-cavalry* unit can be the most effective piece in the game against a *Martian Battle Machine*, something is wrong somewhere. The lack of ranged combat rules for heat rays and artillery are sorely missed. And surely Black Smoke could have found its way in as an optional rule, couldn't it? From the company that gave us *Star Fleet Battles*, WotW is a let down. Particularly when all we're getting in a $10 game are the usual contents of a $5 capsule game plus an extra counter sheet and a box (and less rules than many of TFG's capsules have). I expected so much more. I hope TFG will at least consider an advanced version of the game or an expansion set to the *real* WotW will someday be available.

On to *Space Opera*, another disappointment. On first glance, the game looks so good! I snatched it right up, thinking *Traveller* had a worthy rival at last. On deeper inspection, I realized GDW has no worries. *Space Opera* has much to commend it: the character's skills, the varied psionics, the alien characters, the weapons and the equipment – my God! – the *equipment*! As for playability, forget it! The thing is so complicated it would take a Ph.D. to unravel it all. Characters take hours to create – and seconds to die. And the *typos*! Why a major company like FGU can't hire a proofreader (if one did read the proofs before they were printed, he should be fired) is beyond me. Whole lines are dropped; vital numbers are replaced with punctuation marks; information and sections are mentioned which don't exist; contradictions abound. I get the feeling that buried somewhere amidst typos, bad grammar, contradictions, and omissions, there may be a

good SF role-playing game in there – if only FGU would clean the thing up and release a second edition (and send those of us stuck with the first edition a long errata sheet). In the meantime, I *can* recommend *Space Opera* as an excellent sourcebook for *Traveller* and other SF RPGs.

William A. Barton
Brownsburg, Indiana

For the last little while I've been reading in the gaming magazines about how "the Mormons" are banning D&D in Utah. Since I am a Mormon, and since I don't want to be tarred and feathered the next time I attend a D&D convention, let me say my piece.

What's up? Well, in several school districts here in Utah the school boards have voted to ban D&D from being used in the schools. Utah is as Mormon as Italy is Catholic, so I suppose you can say that "the Mormons" banned D&D.

But before all you avid D&D fans rush out to demonstrate in the streets, ask yourselves, "Why'd they do it?"

You see, us Mormons are fundamentalist Christians and we take the Bible fairly literally. We believe in the parting of the Red Sea, the raising of Lazarus, and other miracles from the Bible. You might call them "white magic," or good things done by supernatural means. We are also aware of "black magic," where the scriptures refer to possessions by devils and the antics of the Witch of Endor. And if you think that the supernatural world exists, both black and white, then it seems clear that you don't want to play around with the black stuff.

The question then is: Does D&D delve too deeply into hazardous realms? And how deep is too deeply?

Let's be open-minded and admit that it's a valid question, assuming belief in other-worldly powers. Personally, I think that D&D is all right, and I used to run my own campaign. I even think that *Demons* (SPI) is OK. Games aren't "about" anything – they are abstractions. On the other hand, I can see the point that some people are making. I know that I sure wouldn't want to be in the room when someone was seriously trying out the optional demon conjurations from *Demons*!

The world is not so narrow that there can't be honest disagreements about D&D.

W.G. Armintrout
Toole, Utah

READER ADS

Reader ads are available to individuals (not to companies). $5 per insertion; limit 20 words or four lines.

CATACOMBS BUILDER – seeks exchange of ideas for traps, treasures, monsters, scenery, etc. Mark Bassett, 8438 Snowden Oaks, Laurel, MD 20811.

INTERPLANETARY EMPIRES PBM game starting soon. For information, send SASE to Robert Kaufman, c/o University School, 2785 SOM, Cleveland, OH 44022.

Computer Generated NPCs – compatible with *Bushido*. All levels and all professions. $2 for over 250 – Bruce Duthie, 706-A Benham, Richland, WA 99352.

Looking for old edition microgames (*Melee, Wizard,* etc.). Don't say no until you see offer (*at least* $4 each). Address: Adam Strock, RD3 Burden Lake Road, Averill Park, NY 12018.

PBM dungeon – characters from AD&D, RQ, DQ, TFT, T&T welcome. Free information: Milo B. Shiff, HHC 2 SUPCOM, APO NY 09160.

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NOVA GAME DESIGNS

As Mobius' ship came out of the jump he glanced at the relachron. "Lord! Fifty years out already! We've only been gone three weeks! Mobius to crew", he barked over the intercom, "be alert! I don't think we're going to like what we find."

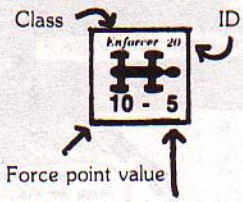
Moments later the com rasped nervously, "Captain! Sensors indicate enemy ships in jump and tac mode in this sector -- wait! Computer analysis indicates tac mode 'ships' are not ships but some form of advanced projectile it can't identify! Computer estimates Tech level at least one higher than ours!"

"Damn!, Mobius fumed. This was not the first time Home Base calculations had been off. Mobius gave what was to be his last orders. "Communications! Send off comprobe to Base 2 immediately to inform them of their screwup! Con! Evasive action!"

Timelag is a strategic science fiction game of combat across the reaches of outer space where Einsteinian time dilation directly effects the flow of play in the game. As the years wear on, the warring civilizations reach higher technological levels. Subsequently, they produce ships which are better than the ships sent out previously.

Timelag comes with 120 die-cut counters, a 3 color map and more!

Sample Counter



Timelag's features include: interstellar "jump" movement, random scatter and elimination, multi-differential combat resolution, space-time warps, sunbursts,

and much more!

A novel mini-game, **Timelag** is available ziplocked, for only $3.95!

Please include 10% for postage and handling

NOVA GAME DESIGNS

Formerly Gameshop Inc. 46 Dougherty Street, Manchester, Connecticut 06040

CALENDAR

April 3-5: CWA's SPRING GAMEFEST. Contact Chicago Wargamers Association, 1 East Schiller 18B, Chicago, IL 60610.

April 3-5: TRI-STATE III. Fantasy, SF, and Micro Armor. Contact Wanna Play?, 5923 Hamilton Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45224.

April 4-5: FANTASY CON 5. F&SF&comics con. Contact at (512) 444-0864 (Austin, TX).

April 4-5: UNHSGC Spring Gaming Festival. Con featuring miniatures, board games, and RPG. Contact R. Bradford Chase, UNH Simulations Games Club, Memorial Union Building, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824.

April 9-12: COLLEGECON 2. F&SF con. Contact CollegeCon 2, c/o Larry Taylor, University of Houston, N-23 UC, Program Council, 4800 Calhoun, Houston, TX 77004.

April 25-26: MADCON III, con for all kinds of gaming, University of Wisconsin Union South. Contact Pegasus Games, 222 W. Gorham, Madison, WI 53703.

May 1-3: USACON 3. Gaming con for SF&F, RP, and boardgaming at University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL. Contact Leo Vaulin, 5856 Lisloy Dr., Mobile, AL 36608.

May 22-25: GRIMCON III. F/SF gaming con, Oakland Hyatt House, 455 Hegenberger Road, Oakland, CA 94612. Contact P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley, CA 94704.

May 29-31: COMPUTERFEST '81. Computer hobby show. SASE to MAAC, P.O. Box 20205, Columbus, OH 43220.

June 5-7: DALCON '81. Gaming con – several tournaments, dealers, etc. Contact Dalcon '81, 12800 Abrams Rd., Dallas, TX 75243.

June 5-7: PHRINGECON 2, SF fan con, including T&T tournament. Contact PhringeCon, Inc., P.O. Box 128, Tempe, AZ 85281.

July 3-5: ORIGINS '81: To be held in Dunfee Motel, San Mateo, CA. Contact Origins '81, P.O. Box 5833, San Jose, CA 95150.

July 9-12: 1981 IPMS NATIONAL CONVENTION. Scale model con. SASE to Ed Cameron, 29 Mathew St., South Farmingdale, NY 11735.

July 11-12: MINNESOTA CAMPAIGN FIVE. Contact Mr. Jeff Berry, 343 E. 19th St. Apt. 4B, Minneapolis, MN 55046.

July 16-19: CWA-CON '81. Wargaming & adventure-gaming con. Contact P.O. Box 10397, Ft. Dearborn Station, Chicago, IL 60610.

July 17-19: ODYSSEY '81. Con featuring all kinds of gaming. Sponsored by the UNH Simulations Games Club; for information contact R. Bradford Chase, UNHSGC, Memorial Union Building, Durham, NH 03824.

July 23-26. GENCON EAST. Contact at P.O. Box 139 Middletown, NJ 17748.

August 13-16: GENCON XIV. FRPG & new gaming releases. Contact GenCon XIV, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

September 3-7: DENVENTION TWO. SF con. Contact Denvention Two, P.O. Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211 or (303) 433-9774.

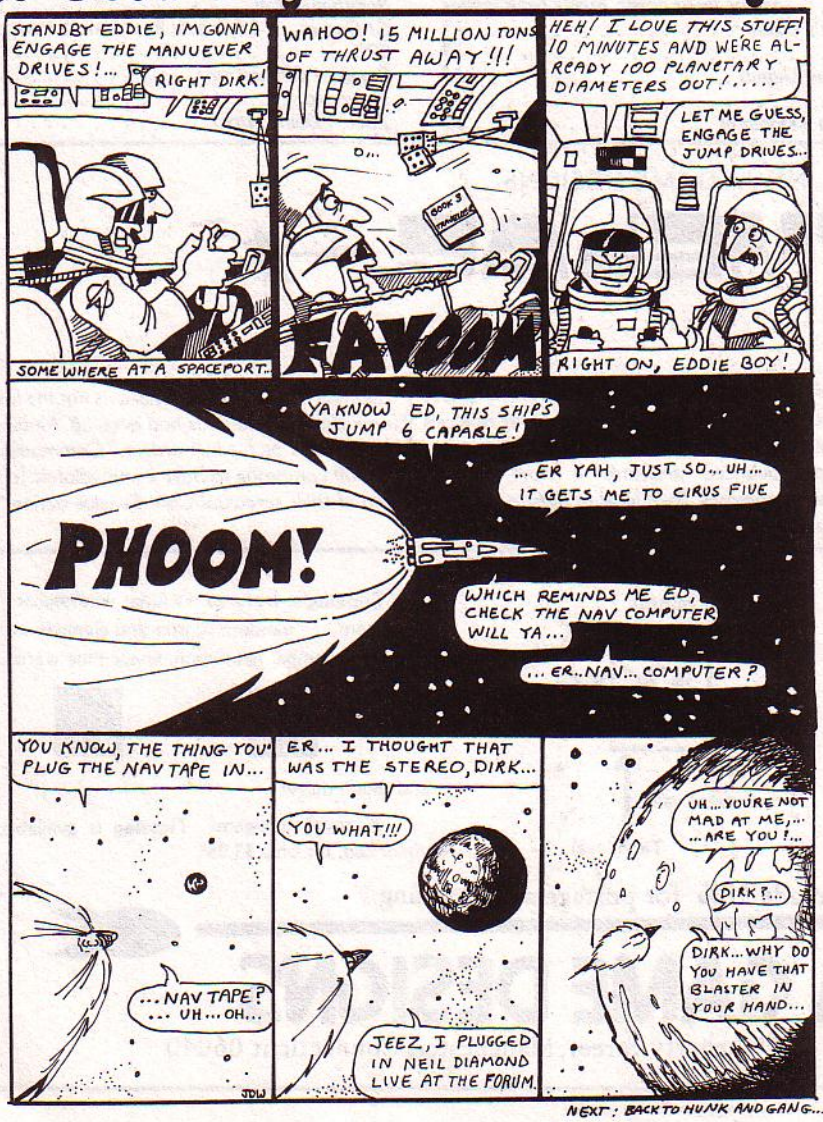
September 4-7: GLASC VI, simulation gaming con, including monster games. Contact GLASC Secretary, c/o L. Daniel, 20550 Wyandotte St., Canoga Park, CA 91306.

September 11-13: DRAGON FLIGHT, a FRP con, to be held in Seattle. Contact The Brass Dragon Society, P.O. Box 33872, Seattle, WA 98133.

September 25-27: Babel Con '81. Star Trek, F&SF con. Contact Steve Harrison, Babel Con '81, 1355 Cornell SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

CONVENTION ORGANIZERS – let us know about your con! Free publicity never hurts.

The Good Guys by JD


STANDBY EDDIE, IM GONNA ENGAGE THE MANUEVER DRIVES!...
RIGHT DIRK!
SOMEWHERE AT A SPACEPORT...
WAHOO! 15 MILLION TONS OF THRUST AWAY!!!
FAVOOM
HEH! I LOVE THIS STUFF! 10 MINUTES AND WERE ALREADY 100 PLANETARY DIAMETERS OUT!.....
LET ME GUESS, ENGAGE THE JUMP DRIVES...
RIGHT ON, EDDIE BOY!
YA KNOW ED, THIS SHIPS JUMP 6 CAPABLE!
... ER YAH, JUST SO... UH... IT GETS ME TO CIRUS FIVE
PHOOM!
WHICH REMINDS ME ED, CHECK THE NAV COMPUTER WILL YA...
... ER..NAV... COMPUTER?
YOU KNOW, THE THING YOU PLUG THE NAV TAPE IN...
... NAV TAPE? ... UH... OH...
ER... I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE STEREO, DIRK...
YOU WHAT!!!
JEEZ, I PLUGGED IN NEIL DIAMOND LIVE AT THE FORUM.
UH... YOURE NOT MAD AT ME,... ...ARE YOU?...
DIRK?...
DIRK... WHY DO YOU HAVE THAT BLASTER IN YOUR HAND...
JDW
NEXT: BACK TO HUNK AND GANG...

News & Plugs

SPI, continuing its association with current movies, is offering *Dawn of the Dead.* Upcoming non-movie offerings include *Spies.*

Gougem Games has released the second edition of *BananaQuest*. The new edition features better-Xeroxed counter sheets and actual banana play aids. An errata sheet for the first edition is available from the publisher for $8.95.

Game Designers' Workshop has sold the *Grenadier* to Jeff Tibbets, manager of Armageddon Distributors. His first issue will appear May 1.

New album games scheduled from Yaquinto include *Battle, Roaring 20's, Neck and Neck, Market Madness, Fall of South Vietnam, Apache, Superiority*, and *Adventurer.*

Eon is planning two more supplements to *Cosmic Encounter* – each with 15 new aliens.

The deadline for Origins awards nominations ballots has been extended to May 8.

New and impending releases from Task Force Games include *Federation Space*, a boxed version of *Operation Pegasus*, boxed *Swordquest, Power Play, Psychic, Ultra Warrior, Survival / the Barbarian* (a double game), and *Battlewagon.*

Broadsword Miniatures (1691 S. Hidden Hills Parkway, Stone Mountain, GA 30088) is a fairly new miniatures company. Their line includes a number of detailed 25mm fantasy figures, as well as a few 54mm and 90mm offerings.

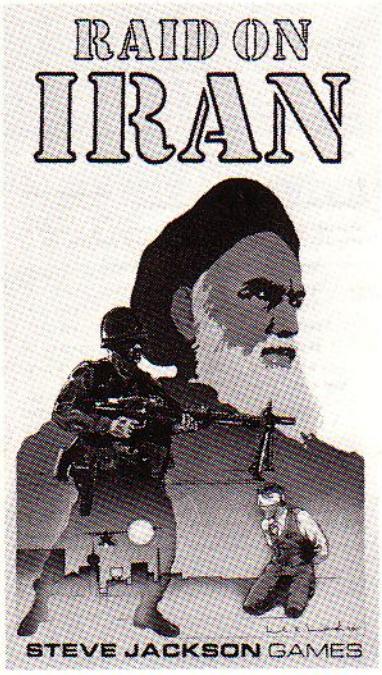
Archives Miniatures has a new address: 1015 Howard Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94401.

According to the *Science Fiction Review,* the magazines *Galileo* and *Galaxy* have folded.

Timelag and *Hammer of Thor* are both being re-issued with improved maps and other components, according to the publisher, Nova Game Designs.

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Yes, it had to happen. Steve Jackson – the designer of OGRE, G.E.V., and THE FANTASY TRIP – is now in business on his own. An independent publisher. Designing the kind of games you want to play – and producing them with the quality you'd expect from far more expensive packages. Full-color maps and covers . . . illustrated rules . . . multi-color counters . . . at $3 per game! Read on . . .



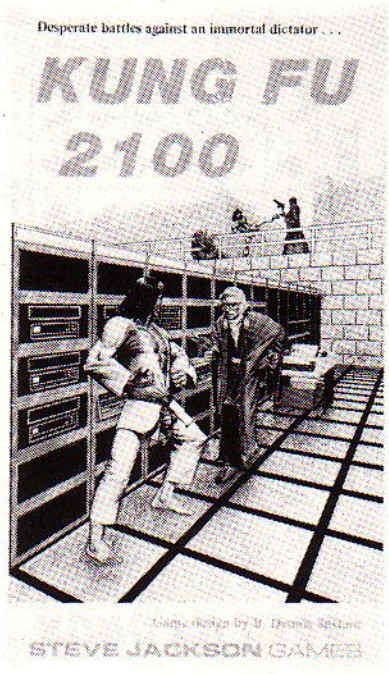
Can you free the hostages?

A simulation game about the U.S. raid into Tehran. If the raid had gone in, Special Forces teams would have battled Iranian fanatics – with the hostages' lives in the balance. An alternate scenario explores the possibility that the *Ayatollah* might have been the raid's target.

Rules cover U.S. surprise, mob action, helicopter breakdown (of course!), undercover aid, panicked/berserk militants, and more. For one or two players; playing time under 90 minutes.

RAID ON IRAN includes a full-color 16" x 21" map of the embassy grounds, 119 counters in 3 colors, illustrated rules sheet, and tables.

Game design by Steve Jackson.



For years the CloneMasters have ruled the world. Their only foes are the Terminators – trained from birth in the martial arts. Now *you* are a Terminator. With only two companions, you must smash your way into the fortress of the CloneMaster – to destroy him forever.

But his guards are many and loyal. Like you, they can kill with a single blow. And time is against you . . .

KUNG FU 2100 includes 114 counters in 3 colors; 16" x 21" rules sheet; 10" x 21" color map; extra CRT and record sheets; ziplock bag. For 1 or 2 players; plays in under 1½ hours.

Designed by B. Dennis Sustare. Edited by Steve Jackson and Forrest Johnson.

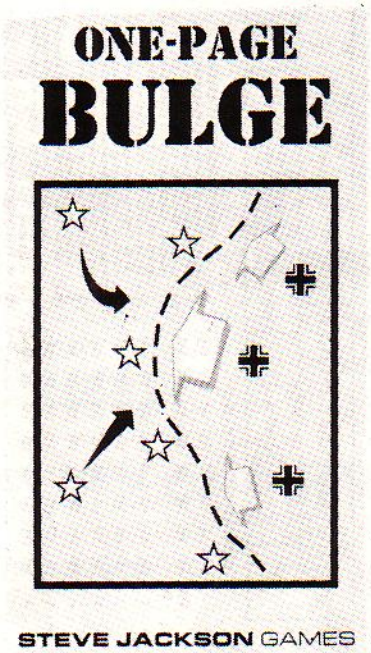
CARDBOARD HEROES

FULL-COLOR 25mm miniatures – printed on heavy card stock. Each figure [illegible] form its own base. Front faci[illegible] one side (see above) [illegible]

Your [illegible] etail ar[illegible] the co[illegible] fig-ure[illegible] miniatures as beau[illegible] detailed as these.

S[illegible] heroes for all your games: men, [illegible]s, dwarves, halflings, fighters, wizards, clerics, thieves . . . 40 figures in all . . . only $3.

There are now FOUR sets of Cardboard Heroes! See page 24 of this issue for details – and pictures!



It started as a challenge: Design a good wargame with *only one page* of rules. ONE-PAGE BULGE met the challenge! A regimental-level simulation of the Battle of the Bulge – with complete, detailed rules – including weather and Allied air superiority, German supply and isolation, and optional rules for bridge destruction and capture of Allied supplies.

Components include 16" x 13" full-color map, 112 counters in 3 colors, turn record track with CRT, ziplock bag, and *one page* (8" x 11", both sides) of rules. For 1 or 2 players; playing time 1 to 2 hours.

Game design by Steve Jackson.

Please send me the following: ( ) RAID ON IRAN ( ) KUNG FU 2100 ( ) ONE-PAGE BULGE ( ) CARDBOARD HEROES. I have enclosed $3 for each item, plus 25 cents per item for 3rd class postage, or 50 cents per item for 1st class postage. Texas residents please add 5% sales tax.

Please allow 2 weeks for 1st class, or 4-6 weeks for 3rd class. Sorry – we cannot accept retail orders from outside the US and Canada at present. Hobby store and distributor inquiries invited.

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

City . . . . . *State* . . . . . *Zip* . . . . . .

I am paying by ( ) check ( ) money order ( )credit card. Total enclosed . . . . . .

CHARGE ORDERS (please do not charge purchases under $10)

( ) Charge my Visa ( ) Charge my MasterCard

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Subscribers to THE SPACE GAMER get free postage on game orders. If you subscribe to TSG, use the order form on your mailer cover or include your mailing label. Or subscribe now ($21 for 12 monthly issues, $39 for 24 issues) – and your game postage is free.

EARTH EDITION

THE MARTIAN CHRONICLE

BY PHOBOS PUBLISHING

Win Your Character In Metal... Martian Metal

EARTH MAY BE HIDEOUT

Reward Offered By The Imperium

Imperial Security Forces Public Information Office has released a galactic-wide APB on the individuals pictured above. These two men, as shown by a security force artists rendition, are beleived to be the leaders of a band of Thugs & Ruffians responsible for the destruction of a TRAVELLERS Aid Compound in the Glisten sector. As their crimes have been well thought out no photograph of them or their compatriots has been acquired. These same individuals are being sought by the ISF for : Kidnapping, Arson, Robbery, Assault & Battery, destruction of government property, destruction of private property, illegal transportation of firearms and energy weapons and numerous other crimes. They are known to be armed and should be considered to be very dangerous.

They were last sighted in a package of TRAVELLER miniatures by MARTIAN METALS # 2003, located in your favorite hobby or gaming store.

All bounty hunters and Gamemasters are being urged to secure this package at the unearthly low price of $2.95. And while this is being accomplished be sure and check out the other TRAVELLER packs for possible recruits to your universe. It may be advisable to buy a pack of Imperial Marines #2005, or Mercenaries #2011 to keep these criminals under control. Under no circumstances should these Thugs & Ruffians be allowed to escape. If a capture is not possible at any of the stores you deal with first ask the manager when they expect the next arrival of TRAVELLER miniatures, if this produces negative results, contact the agency listed below:

Security Agency of Mars
Boks 778
Cedar Park, Tx. 78613

MARTIAN INVASION IMMINENT

MARTIAN METALS recently received an inquiry from one Mike Patterson of Montgomery, Alabama, Earth, requesting information on MARTIAN METALS products. He informed us that he could not obtain our figures or information at his local shop, and stated that they feared not an invasion. Well, we must have coordinates (address) before an invasion can be made. If any more of you earthlings are being deprived of our miniatures, just send us the name of the store you deal with and we will gladly invade them with information as to how they can acquire our product. If after this preliminary attack your dealer is still reluctant, you may wish to change stores as he might be of Venusian persuasion.

SPORTS BRIEF

Quartendor Tryouts

ATTENTION: The tryouts for the quartendor team will be held on Olympus Mons on Dorka 23, 24, and 25. Let's have a good turn out.

TROLLBALL SCORES:

6-2, 9-5, 1-4, 12-0

Martian Metals & Phobos Publishing

ANNOUNCE

"Can You Guess Your Own Name"

CONTEST

MARTIAN METALS announces the first annual "Guess Your Own Name" contest. Any one can enter and anyone can win. No experience necessary.

You are no doubt wondering what you have to do to enter this contest and what you can win. Well, you enter by filling out a handy dandy entry form found at your local hobby or game shop. On this form you will find only one question to be answered: "What is your name, address and phone number?" After writing down your guess, mail this form and one dosh (that's a proof of purchase found on the back of our DRAGON SLAYER 25's or 15's)to any of the addresses found in this ad. Each entry form MUST be accompanied by a dosh or an end panel from any of the MARTIAN METALS boxed sets or the top of a TRAVELLER package (approximately 1" worth, that's 87.3 Squondiles). So now you want to know why you should do this. Simple, if your guess is correct your entry will be eligible for the grand drawing to be held at GENCON in August of 1981. There will be four winners chosen at random according to zip codes. The United States Zip Code system has been divided into four separate areas: AREA #1 codes beginning with 0, 1. AREA #2 - 2, 3, 4,. AREA #3 - 5, 6, 7. AREA #4 - 8, 9. One winner from each area will be chosen and notified by mail and/or phone. All four winners will receive their own personal character sculpted and manufactured by MARTIAN METALS. This will be your choice of type, whether fantasy, sci-fi or anything else and must be 25mm or less in height. This figure will not be duplicated in any way so that you will have your one and only character all to yourself. Just think, a one of a kind figure just for you. All winners must supply good descriptions and/or artwork of the figure they desire to have made.

This Contest will begin on March 15 1981, and will end on August 15, 1981. If entry forms are not available in your area put your guess on a 3" x 5" card or the handy dandy entry form supplied below or write to either MARTIAN METALS or PHOBOS PUBLISHING and ask for some. Remember, all entries MUST be accompanied by a dosh, end panel or TRAVELLER top. Get your store to participate because we have a special prize for the store whose name appears on the winning entries.

This offer void on VENUS & MERCURY. All entries become the property of PHOBOS PUBLISHING and can not be returned (why would they want it back anyway, Boss?).

HANDY DANDY ENTRY FORM

"GUESS YOUR OWN NAME"

NAME?_____

STREET?_____

CITY?_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE?_____

send to:

MARTIAN METALS
BOKS 778

PHOBOS PUBLISHING
BOKS 838

CEDAR PARK, TX. 78613

Catalog: MARS BOKS 778 CEDAR PARK, TX. 78613....EARTH